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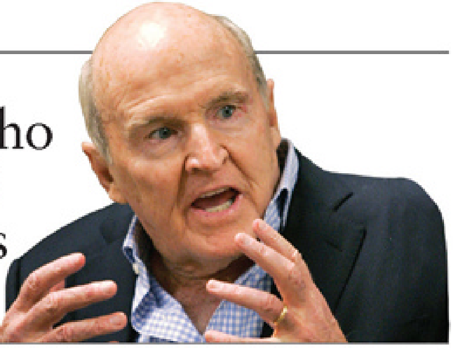
Jack Welch



THE WEEK

THE BEST OF THE U.S. AND INTERNATIONAL MED

Viral anxiety

How bad will the coronavirus outbreak be?

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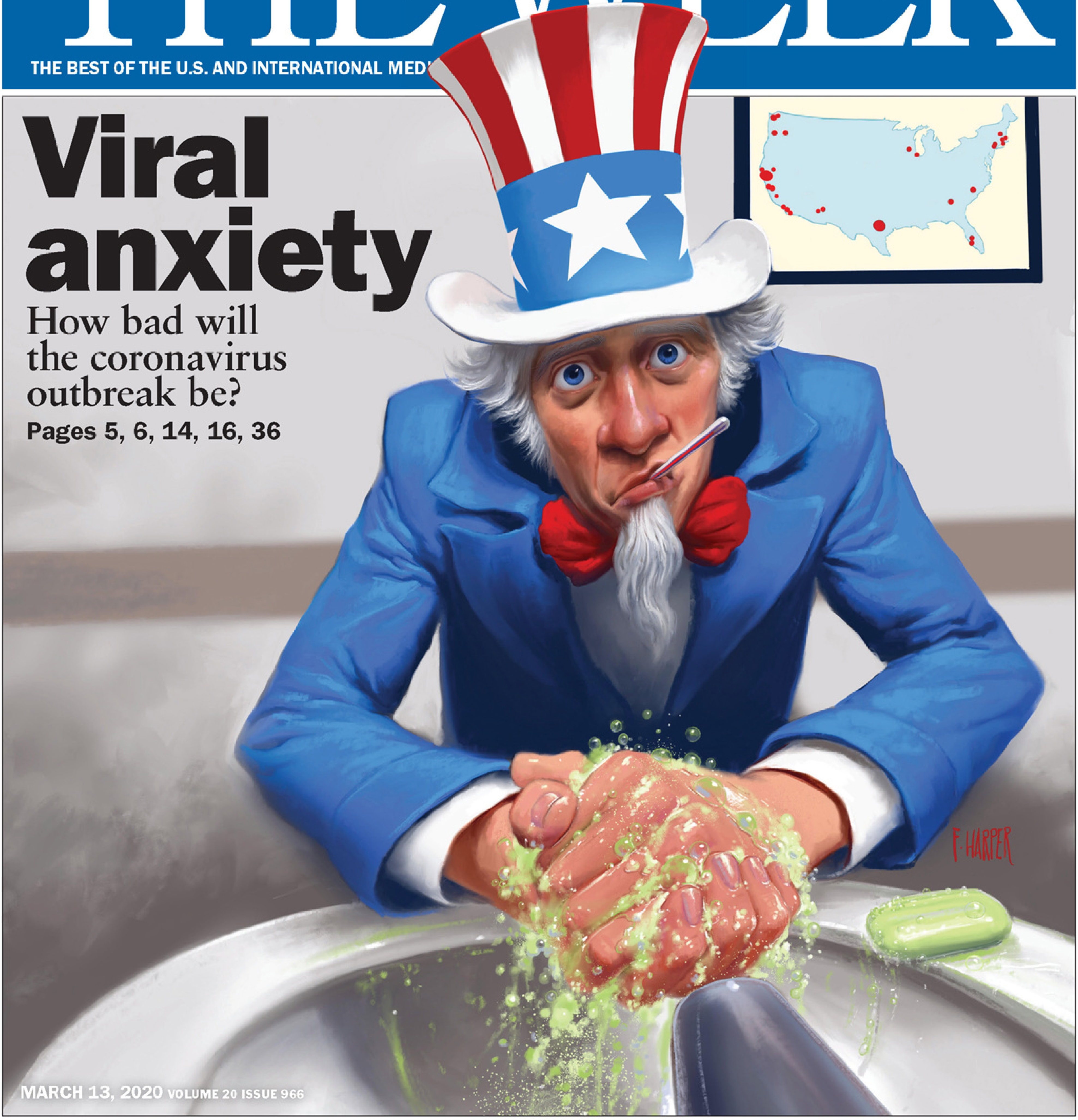

MARCH 13, 2020 VOLUME 20 ISSUE 966

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Editor's letter

Afghanistan in 2020 is starting to look a lot like Vietnam in 1973. That year, with no input from South Vietnam's pro-U.S. government, President Richard Nixon signed a deal with North Vietnam to speed America's exit from a deeply unpopular "forever war." The Trump administration struck a similar accord with the Afghan Taliban this week, also with minimal buy-in from our local allies. (See Talking Points.) In return for vague Taliban promises to shun al Qaida and talk power sharing with the government in Kabul, the U.S. will withdraw its 12,000 troops over the next 14 months. History tells us what's likely to happen next. Two years after Nixon inked his accord, the North Vietnamese overran Saigon and sent hundreds of thousands of South Vietnamese to re-education camps. Should the U.S. quit Afghanistan, the Taliban may take Kabul not long after. If they do, bloody reprisals are certain, and the women the U.S. encouraged to leave their homes, attend schools, and work will be forced back into the Middle Ages. Many Afghans will rightly feel betrayed by our departure. Yet by most measures, America's nearly 20-year-old war there is a failure. We did annihilate the al Qaida terrorists responsible for 9/11 and topple the Taliban government that sheltered them. But the Taliban—which have a strong base of support among the country's ethnic Pashtuns—have surged back and now control 50 percent of the country. Our efforts to create a thriving democracy have also amounted to nothing. The government in Kabul is riddled with corruption and hugely unpopular, and much of the territory it supposedly controls is dominated by warlords deeply involved in opium trafficking. Afghanistan has already cost us $2 trillion and the lives of 2,300 American troops; more blood and treasure won't buy victory. Nixon once promised that he would deliver "peace with honor" in Vietnam. We should know that no such thing is possible in Afghanistan.

Theunis Bates
Managing editor

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THE WEEK

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Biden’s historic comeback transforms race

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Biden at victory rally in California: A super Super Tuesday

What happened

In a stunning turnaround, Joe Biden catapulted to the front of the Democratic presidential race this week with a powerhouse Super Tuesday showing that effectively narrowed the primary to a two-person race between the moderate former vice president and democratic socialist Sen. Bernie Sanders. It was an extraordinary comeback for a candidate who’d stumbled in early debates and performed poorly in the first three primaries and caucuses. Biden’s campaign was revived after African-American and suburban voters gave him an unexpectedly decisive win in Saturday’s South Carolina primary. Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Pete Buttigieg both then dropped out and endorsed Biden, and their backing made Biden the clear choice for moderate Democrats panicking at the thought of putting the far-left Sanders up against President Trump. On Super Tuesday, Biden won 10 states out of 14, with surprise wins in Maine, Massachusetts, and Minnesota. The next day, Mike Bloomberg dropped out and also threw his weight—and potentially his war chest—behind Biden. “For those who have been knocked down, counted out, left behind, this is your campaign,” said Biden at a rally in Los Angeles.

Sanders had his share of wins, most notably in delegate gold mine California, where he held a comfortable lead as *The Week* went to press. Faring well with young and Latino voters, he won decisively in Colorado, Utah, and his home state of Vermont. But polls showed that late-deciding voters broke heavily toward Biden, who led in the delegate count with 566 to Sanders’ 501 as of Wednesday. Sen. Elizabeth Warren was far behind with 61 delegates, after suffering a humiliating third-place showing in her home state. Sanders said he’d called Warren and that she was “assessing her campaign.”

The rout was a fatal blow for Bloomberg, whose late-entry strategy was built on a $500 million Super Tuesday spending blitz. Sanders, meanwhile, pledged he was in for the long haul. “I tell you with absolute confidence, we’re going to win the Democratic nomination,” he said. “You cannot beat Trump with the same-old, same-old kind of politics.”

What the editorials said

“Hold the revolution,” said ***The Wall Street Journal***. Just as Bernie Sanders’ leftist takeover of the Democratic Party was looking like a done deal, “literally in four days the Democratic race has turned upside down.” Biden’s “gaffes and stumbles” may have worried voters, but “the prospect of an avowed socialist atop the ticket has scared millions of Democrats into Biden’s arms.” To prove he’s the Democrats’ best bet against Trump, Biden will have to sharpen his game. He’ll “be back in the relentless media spotlight, and his vigor and acuity will be tested anew.”

Voters have “hit the reset button,” said the ***San Francisco Chronicle***. It turns out the results in Iowa and New Hampshire had no bearing on what the larger electorate actually wanted. The Democrats may be divided, but “even a fractured electorate can find a single purpose,” said the ***Houston Chronicle***. “In this case: to defeat Donald Trump in November.”

What the columnists said

Biden is staging “one of the greatest comebacks in American political history,” said **Jim Geraghty** in ***NationalReview.com***. And not a moment too soon for the Democratic establishment, who were looking down the barrel of a “catastrophe,” with House Democrats in swing states “openly fretting that Sanders could cost them their majority.” Eleven governorships are up for grabs this year, some in states such as North Carolina and Montana, where “socialism is not an easy sell.” But now Biden has delivered “the worst beating of a socialist since Rocky fought Ivan Drago.”

Super Tuesday’s “clearest message” was the limits of Sanders’ appeal, said **Ronald Brownstein** in ***TheAtlantic.com***. Despite the passion of his core followers, Sanders has not generated his promised large turnout of young and first-time voters. And when it comes to building a real coalition, “he’s failed on almost every front,” especially among older and African-American voters. Therein lies Sanders’ dilemma, said **Ezra Klein** in ***Vox.com***. As the front-runner, he needed to find a way to unite the Democratic Party around him, but that’s hard to do when you’re running as a revolutionary with obvious “contempt” for the “corrupt” mainstream of the party. He’s learning that “if you treat voters and officials in the party you want to lead as the enemy, a lot of people in that party aren’t going to trust you to lead them.”

Sanders is a risky nominee, but so is Biden, said **Paul Waldman** in ***WashingtonPost.com***. His comeback “does not change the fundamental fact that he is simply terrible at running for president.” On the campaign trail he’s showing his age, meandering in his speech, giving feeble debate performances and saying “cringeworthy things on a daily basis.” Once “Trump’s disinformation machine” turns its full power on old Joe, he could suffer the same fate as Hillary Clinton did in 2016.

What next?

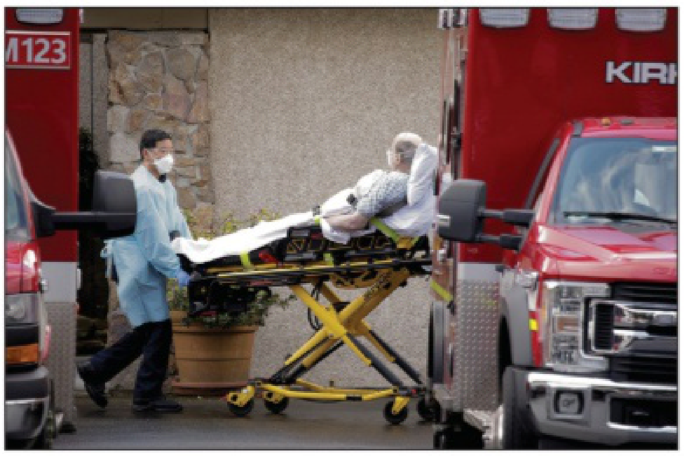
Biden’s “stunning turnaround” completely reshapes next week’s Michigan primary, said **Todd Spangler** in the ***Detroit Free Press***. It’s a golden opportunity for Sanders and Biden to make their case “as the Democrat best poised to defeat Trump in November,” since Trump won the pivotal swing state in 2016 by just 10,704 votes. “Expect both to hammer at key constituencies,” with Biden banking on black voters and suburban whites and Sanders courting young progressives and unions. Missouri, Idaho, Mississippi, Washington, and North Dakota also hold contests next week, and if Sanders and Biden keep trading victories, “a contested convention” is still in play; *FiveThirtyEight.com* estimates that there’s a 60 percent chance that nobody wins a majority of delegates. If Sanders wins Michigan decisively, that prospect becomes more likely. But if Biden continues his momentum with a win there, he’s likely to get a big haul of delegates in Florida and Ohio on March 17 and have a clear path to the nomination.

AP

Illustration by Fred Harper.
Cover photos from AP, Reuters, AP

U.S. coronavirus cases mounting

What happened



An infected patient in Washington State

The U.S. braced for a surge in the number of new coronavirus infections this week, with reported cases now spanning at least 16 states, including an outbreak at a Washington state nursing home and cases in New York City and Los Angeles. In all, health officials reported 153 American cases and 11 deaths (eight linked to the Seattle-area nursing home). Los Angeles declared a state of emergency and warned of potential school closures. The World Health Organization said the respiratory illness, or Covid-19, had infected 92,000-plus people and killed 3,200 in more than 70 countries. The mortality rate (3.4 percent) in reported cases was higher than in early estimates, though experts say less serious cases may not have been caught by testing. Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, said the virus was spreading rapidly in the U.S. and was reaching "pandemic proportions" throughout the world.

President Trump named Vice President Mike Pence as head of his administration's coronavirus task force after infighting and missteps under Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar. Government labs limited access to tests after an initial batch of kits was found to be faulty, and patients with possible symptoms were sent away by hospitals and urgent-care clinics. Testing criteria were loosened this week, but only a fraction of the promised kits have been made available. Congress this week allocated $8.3 billion to fight the disease—$6 billion more than the White House requested. The president himself contended the threat was under control. "The risk to the American people remains very low," he said. "We've done a great job keeping it down to a minimum."

What the editorials said

Now the chickens are coming home to roost, said ***The Boston Globe***. For more than three years, our science-denying president has gutted the national infrastructure for dealing with a pandemic. Trump disbanded the National Security Council pandemic team and took a scythe to the budget of the Centers for Disease Control, forcing "a retreat from pandemic-prevention efforts in China." Instead of a scientist, he installed Pence as head of the government's response, even though as Indiana's governor Pence worsened an HIV outbreak by delaying a needle exchange for months on moral grounds. The president has "put lives at risk."

Yes, the U.S. got off to a bad start with the crisis, said ***NationalReview.com***. But to hear hysterical, opportunistic Democrats describe it, Trump personally "concocted the virus in the West Wing." The truth is that "by and large" the administration has "acted appropriately," with travel restrictions to and from the hardest-hit countries and a sensible, if belated, loosening of testing procedures and criteria.

What the columnists said

The Trump administration has "bungled its coronavirus response" in so many ways, said **Will Peischel** and **Jessica Washington** in ***MotherJones.com***. The State Department put 14 infected Americans on board two flights from Japan with 300 uninfected passengers. A whistleblower said HHS workers welcomed Americans from Wuhan, China, the disease's epicenter, without proper training or gear. And Pence has blocked government scientists and experts from giving information to the public, effectively "taking control of all public government statements on the coronavirus."

President Trump's handling of this crisis could cost him the election, said **Peggy Noonan** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. He's running on a strong economy, booming stock market, and historically low unemployment, but now all of that is endangered by the virus' spread. Trump's response thus far is "not encouraging." His insistence that the risk of an epidemic in the U.S. "remains very low" is childish. "I wonder if the president understands what jeopardy he's in."

America's health-care system may not be up to this challenge, said **Anne Applebaum** in ***TheAtlantic.com***. "The hospital system has been pared down to the bone; there is no extra capacity, and everyone knows it." There are 27.5 million uninsured citizens and tens of millions who are underinsured. Already, there are reports of costly surprise medical bills for those who sought testing or were forced to quarantine at a hospital. If people must pay to get tested, they may refuse. "Epidemics, like disasters, have a way of revealing underlying truths about the societies they impact."

It wasn't all bad

■ Harold Storelee, 88, prides himself on his manicured lawn. But while mowing the grass last week, the Washington state resident fell and broke his hip. An ambulance raced to the scene and three EMTs took Storelee to the hospital. After a hectic day responding to car accidents and other emergencies, the medics clocked off at 5 p.m. But rather than go home, the trio went to Storelee's house and spent an hour finishing tidying the yard. "We knew he'd be down for a while," said EMT Alexander Trautman. "The least we could do was go back and help out."

■ Two years ago, Finn Lanning was stunned to hear that one of his middle-school math students wouldn't be returning to school. Damien, then 12, had an autoimmune disease that was causing his kidneys to shut down, and he had to move from his foster home to a hospital. Because the youngster lacked a "stable home environment," he wasn't eligible for a transplant and would have to spend 12 hours a day on dialysis. Lanning, 37, was determined to help, so he volunteered to foster Damien and underwent intensive training to learn how to administer his dialysis. Damien finally got a kidney last summer and now looks forward to a bright future with his new dad and favorite teacher.

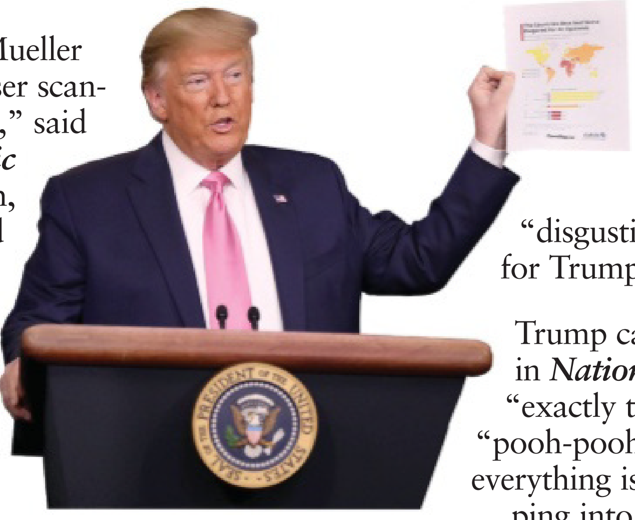
Damien and Lanning: Family

■ In 1973, Debra McKenna lost the class ring that her boyfriend had given her somewhere in a Maine department store. She was upset, but her boyfriend Shawn soon replaced it with a wedding band, and the pair lived a joyful life together until 2017, when he died of cancer. Then last month McKenna received a call telling her the ring had been found—in a forest in Finland. Treasure hunter Marko Saarinen came across it while out with a metal detector and traced it back to McKenna by researching its engravings on the internet. How the ring ended up in Finland is a mystery, but McKenna is sure that Shawn would "think it was really cool."

Reuters, Capturedbymarcela.com

Controversy of the week

Covid-19: Is Trump up to the challenge?



Trump: 'An incredible job' by us

President Trump survived impeachment and the Mueller investigation, and has "waved away dozens of lesser scandals as though they were nothing more than gnats," said **Quinta Jurecic** and **Benjamin Wittes** in *TheAtlantic.com*. In the rapidly spreading coronavirus, though, he "faces a challenge unlike any he has confronted before"—one that he can't fix with his "usual tool kit" of bullying, lies, and claims of a "witch hunt." As the deadly virus started to spread within our borders, Trump repeatedly made it clear he views the epidemic in purely political and selfish terms, as a threat to the stock market and his re-election. Virtually every day, the president and his aides have used public statements to praise the "incredible job" they are doing, to minimize the threat, and to blame Democrats for politicizing the epidemic. But "denial isn't going to work" against a virus that doesn't watch Fox News. Trump owes his success to a visceral understanding that "what passes for reality in American society is far more malleable" than anyone realized, said **Eric Levitz** in *NYMag.com*. But loyal Senate Republicans can't "hold a vote to make an epidemic go away," and Trump's angry blame shifting is not going to help him, or the nation, "when Americans start dying."

It's Trump's critics who are lying, said **Miranda Devine** in *NYPost.com*. Desperate to wring political gain out of what *New York Times* columnist Gail Collins dubbed "Trumpvirus," the media spent the last week spreading the lie that Trump dismissed the epidemic itself as a "hoax"; in fact, he used that term to describe the Democrats' claim he'd mismanaged the response. Trump actually deserves credit for imposing travel restrictions on coronavirus-stricken China back in January—a decision Democrats derided at the time as xenophobic. A viral pandemic begins on the other side of the world, and yet "the liberal intelligentsia tries to name it after the American president," said **Scott Jennings** in the Louisville *Courier-Journal*. Sadly, as this virus spreads, the "disgustingly disloyal opposition" will be rooting for Trump to fail.

Trump can rise to this occasion, said **Rich Lowry** in *NationalReview.com*, but so far he's taken "exactly the wrong approach." Rather than "pooh-poohing worries about the virus and saying everything is under control," Trump should be tapping into that side of himself that *overreacts* to threats. He should be "pulling up the drawbridge" and imposing additional travel restrictions, putting true medical experts instead of Vice President Mike Pence in charge of the U.S. response, and spending however much money it takes to control and ultimately defeat this viral threat.

Let's hope Trump follows that advice, said **Jonathan Chait** in *NYMag.com*. But we're talking about a remarkably ignorant president who can't even grasp "the basic medical facts" about the coronavirus. Meeting with pharmaceutical executives this week about the effort to develop a vaccine, Trump asked one CEO why we couldn't just use the regular flu vaccine (um, it's a different virus) and pressed the execs to skip clinical trials and release vaccines "in a couple of months" instead of a year—that is, before the election. We're facing a global pandemic behind "the leadership of a man who doesn't believe in science," said **Paul Krugman** in *The New York Times*, and who dismisses all bad news as "fake." Anyone looking to Donald Trump for competent leadership in the weeks and months ahead simply "hasn't been paying attention."

Only in America

■ A blind Chicago man has been denied U.S. citizenship because he is "unable to read a sentence in the English language." Mexican immigrant Lucio Delgado, 23, taught himself English by listening to the radio. But officials refused to provide the reading portion of his naturalization test in braille. "To receive such negative news shattered all of my dreams in one second," Delgado said.

■ A New Jersey couple says their Catholic church is refusing to give their son Holy Communion because he's autistic. Anthony LaCugna, 8, has been studying to receive Communion, but the church told the LaCugnas that because Anthony is largely nonverbal and cannot express "contrition" for his sins, he cannot receive the sacrament. "It is absurd," said Anthony's mom. "My son is a child of God."

Good week for:

Woke epidemiology, after the World Health Organization urged against saying that people are "transmitting Covid-19," "infecting others," or "spreading the virus," because that wording "assigns blame." Instead, we should refer to people "acquiring" the virus.

American Samoa, whose profile was briefly raised when Mike Bloomberg won the South Pacific island chain's caucuses with 175 total votes. It was the only jurisdiction Bloomberg won after he spent $500 million on his campaign.

Computer literacy, after Fox News anchor Brit Hume tweeted out a screenshot of his computer, forgetting to close a browser tab on which the 76-year-old had evidently been researching a "Sexy Vixen" set of vinyl lingerie, retailing for a hard-to-resist $15.37.

Bad week for:

Eco-anxiety, with a new BBC survey of 8- to 16-year-olds showing that 73 percent are worried about the future of the planet, with 19 percent having had climate change–themed nightmares.

Garth Brooks, after the country music legend was deluged with online vitriol for wearing a Detroit Lions NFL jersey with the name "Sanders" on the back during a concert in Detroit. The jersey honored Lions Hall of Fame running back Barry Sanders, but some of Brooks' disappointed fans assumed he was showing support for Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders.

Oprah Winfrey, who while delivering a speech in Los Angeles about wellness and the importance of "balance" in life lost her balance and fell over on the stage. "It is what it is," mused the 66-year-old later. "You would prefer not to fall, but now I've fallen."

A second try for spy chief nomination

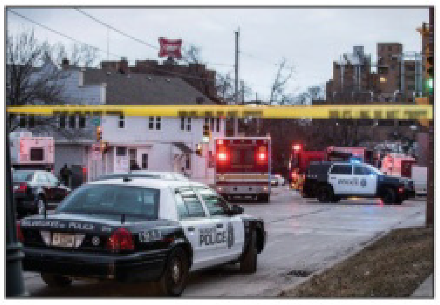
President Trump announced last week that he would again nominate Rep. John Ratcliffe (R-Texas), an outspoken ally, to be director of national intelligence, after Ratcliffe's nomination for the role last July imploded within days. Senate Republicans offered tepid support for Ratcliffe, who withdrew from consideration last year after it was revealed that he had exaggerated his work prosecuting terrorists. Ratcliffe has been a vocal skeptic of Russian interference efforts; Trump fired the previous DNI, Joseph Maguire, after Maguire told lawmakers Russia had a "preference" for Trump in the upcoming election. With Ratcliffe's nomination, former ambassador to Germany Richard Grenell, who has also won Trump's confidence, can remain as acting spy chief for up to seven more months.

Getty

The U.S. at a glance...

Milwaukee

Brewery shooting: A longtime employee at the Molson Coors brewery fatally shot five co-workers last week before killing himself. Anthony Ferrill, 51, worked for 17 years as an electrician at the campus famous for its red "Home of the High Life" Miller beer sign. Ferrill showed up in his company uniform with two handguns, one equipped with a silencer, and killed co-workers ages 33 to 57. Although police were silent on a motive, a co-worker says Ferrill was involved in a long-running dispute with colleagues, contending he was discriminated against because he was African-American. Colleagues say a noose was found on Ferrill's locker five years ago, leading managers to call a brewery-wide meeting. Racial tension and taunts were said to be common at the workplace. "The culture of the company was very, very toxic," one former colleague of Ferrill's told *The Washington Post*.



A conflict-plagued workplace

Washington, D.C.

A court divided: The Supreme Court appeared divided this week in the first major abortion case since President Trump's appointees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, joined the bench. Gorsuch was uncharacteristically silent during oral arguments concerning a 2014 Louisiana law that requires abortion clinic doctors to have "admitting privileges" at a hospital within 30 miles. Two of Louisiana's three abortion clinics say they'd be forced to close if the law took effect. The case appeared to hinge on the vote of Chief Justice John Roberts, who dissented in 2016 when the court struck down a virtually identical law in Texas. Roberts suggested he might be bound by that precedent. The court's three female justices indicated they view Louisiana's law as an attack on abortion access, not as a safeguard for women's health.

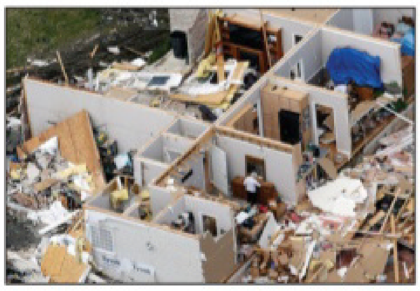
The justices also agreed this week to review a Republican-led effort to invalidate the Affordable Care Act, thrusting the fate of the health-care law into the spotlight ahead of November's elections. Oral arguments will likely come this fall, with a decision in spring or summer 2021; in January, the court declined to fast-track the case to allow a pre-election ruling. The Trump administration backs a lawsuit from Texas and other GOP-controlled states that argues that after Congress eliminated the tax penalty for failing to obtain health insurance, the entire law—including protections for those with pre-existing conditions and extensions for family plans—was invalidated. A district judge in Texas agreed, and a coalition of 20 Democratic-controlled states led by California appealed. This is the third time the Supreme Court will be asked to rule on the ACA's constitutionality. In two previous challenges, Roberts voted to uphold the law.

PATIENTS BEFORE PROFITS
FEMINISM: EQUALITY FOR ALL

Protesters make their case.

Nashville

Twister terror: Tornadoes with winds up to 165 mph roared through four counties this week, killing at least 24 people and leaving some of the worst wreckage in Tennessee history. A nighttime tornado hit downtown Nashville, destroying at least 48 buildings; although the iconic Basement East music venue was left with just one wall standing, most of the city's landmarks and tourist attractions were spared. The worst wreckage was to the east, in Putnam County, where at least 100 homes were destroyed or badly damaged. Some of those killed died in their beds, and at least five of the victims were children under age 13. Days after the storms, dozens of people remained missing. At their peak, about 50,000 customers were without power. More than a dozen polling stations were damaged, forcing Super Tuesday voters to wait in long lines at backup sites.



Salvaging the remains

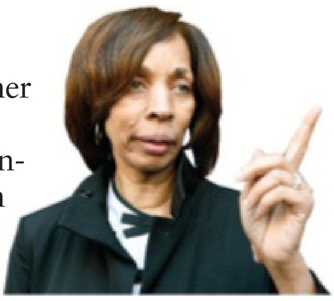
Reuters, AP (3)

Washington, D.C.

Resurrecting Burisma: Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) announced plans this week to subpoena the first witness in a probe into the Ukrainian gas company Burisma, escalating an investigation Democrats say is meant to smear former Vice President Joe Biden just as he becomes the clear front-runner in the party's primary battle. Johnson, chairman of the Senate Homeland Security Committee, wants to call Andrii Telizhenko, a former Ukrainian diplomat who worked as a consultant for Blue Star Strategies, a Democratic firm that represented Burisma in the U.S. Biden's son Hunter earned $50,000 a month to serve on Burisma's board beginning in 2014, while his father ran point on Ukraine policy. Republicans claim Blue Star leveraged Hunter's name to curry favor with State Department officials, and Telizhenko, 29, has pushed the uncorroborated theory that Ukraine worked to boost Hillary Clinton in the 2016 election.

Baltimore

Children's crook: Former Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh was sentenced to three years in prison last week for defrauding a hospital system and the city through massive sales of her children's book series. Pugh, elected in 2015, pleaded guilty last November to using her self-published *Healthy Holly* books to net more than $850,000 illegally. She sold 100,000 copies in a no-bid deal for $500,000 to the University of Maryland Medical System, on whose board of directors she sat, and used other sales to launder illegal campaign contributions and evade taxes. She failed to print thousands of promised books, double-sold thousands more, and left many copies in a warehouse. At her sentencing, a tearful Pugh said, "I beg for forgiveness." In addition to her prison term, Pugh, 69, must forfeit nearly $670,000, including a house she renovated with book sales revenue. She agreed that all unsold *Healthy Holly* books will be destroyed.



Ex-mayor Pugh

The world at a glance...

Targeted by haters

Edmonton, Alberta

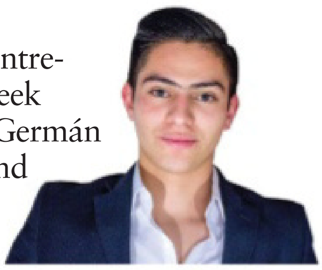
Insulting Greta: An Alberta oil-field company has apologized after one of its managers approved the distribution of hard-hat stickers featuring a graphic cartoon that appears to show 17-year-old climate-change activist Greta Thunberg being sexually assaulted. The stickers given to workers showed the X-Site Energy Services logo along with an image of a naked woman from behind—her back stamped "Greta"—with hands pulling on her braids. "They are starting to get more and more desperate," Thunberg said of the sticker. "This shows that we're winning." Last year, Thunberg led a rally against fossil fuels in oil-rich Alberta a month after her rally in Montreal drew half a million people. Meanwhile, in the English city of Bristol, where Thunberg led a rally last week, the *Bristol Post* newspaper ran the names and photos of six local men who had threatened her on Facebook.

Vatican City

The truth about Pius XII: The Vatican this week opened its archives on Pope Pius XII, the World War II–era pontiff accused of ignoring evidence of the Holocaust. Critics say Pius, sometimes called "Hitler's pope," knew from the anguished reports of Jesuit priests that the Nazis were murdering Jews, but did nothing. Pius' supporters, though, have long contended that the pope worked secretly to save thousands of Jews. Now scholars will get to examine more than 1 million historical documents and draw their own conclusions. Pope Francis said the Pius XII papacy was marked by "moments of grave difficulties, tormented decisions of human and Christian prudence, that to some could appear as reticence." The scholars given access include several from the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C., as well as German historian Hubert Wolf, an expert on Pius XII.

Chihuahua, Mexico

Influencer turned kidnapper: A Mexican YouTuber and entrepreneur who posted inspiring messages online was this week sentenced to 50 years in prison for kidnapping a lawyer. Germán Abraham Loera Acosta, 25, and five other men were found guilty of forcing Thania Denisse, 33, into a car at gunpoint in 2018 and demanding $100,000 in Bitcoin for her release. After the ransom was paid, police traced the digital currency to Loera, whom authorities called the "intellectual author" of the crime. Denisse was rescued from a rented house in the city of Chihuahua two days later and the gang arrested. An influencer and former head of a marketing company, Loera shared numerous motivational tips on his YouTube channel. Are you "taking the right decisions so that within 10 or 15 years you will get where you really want to be?" began one video.



Loera: Left Bitcoin trail

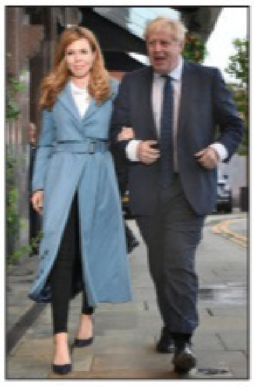
Caracas

Arresting 'saboteurs': Venezuelan authorities have arrested two former directors of the state-run oil company, PDVSA, for allegedly handing the U.S. "strategic, sensitive, and confidential information" that could be used "to attack the oil industry with the imposition of unilateral and illegal measures." Alfredo Marcial Chirinos Azuaje and Aryenis Torrealba were called "high-level collaborators," but their families say they are loyal socialists punished for exposing corruption at the oil company. The arrests come just a week after President Nicolás Maduro declared an "energy emergency" in the country and ordered PDVSA to be restructured. U.S. sanctions against Venezuela, combined with dropping oil prices, have devastated the country's energy industry.

Stung by sanctions

London

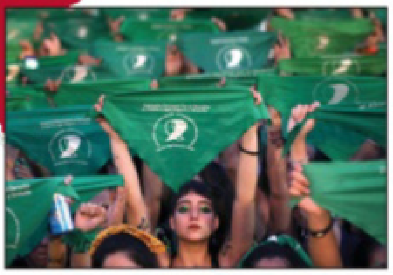
Baby for Boris: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced this week that he is engaged to his live-in partner, Carrie Symonds, 31, and that the couple is expecting a baby in the summer. Johnson, 55, and Symonds are the first unmarried couple to reside in the official 10 Downing Street residence. The prime minister finalized his divorce two weeks ago from his second wife, Marina Wheeler, with whom he has four adult children. He also has at least one additional child born of an affair. The baby news has relieved Johnson of some of the heat he's been taking lately for his absence from flood-stricken regions, and from accusations that Home Secretary Priti Patel has repeatedly bullied her staff.



Expecting

Buenos Aires

Legalizing abortion? Argentina moved closer to becoming the first major Latin American nation to legalize abortion this week, after President Alberto Fernández said he will introduce a bill to make terminations legal in the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. A similar bill failed narrowly in 2018, but that legislation didn't have presidential backing, and since then, the case of an 11-year-old rape victim has swayed public opinion. The girl became pregnant after being raped by her grandmother's partner and requested an abortion. The procedure was repeatedly delayed, and she underwent an emergency C-section in February 2019; her baby died a month later. Fernández said Argentina's total ban on abortions is dangerous, because 350,000 Argentine women have illegal terminations every year, "putting their health and sometimes their lives at risk."



Abortion rights campaigners

AP (2), Facebook, Reuters, AP

The world at a glance...

Moscow

Sticking around

Rewriting constitution: Russian President Vladimir Putin has unveiled a batch of constitutional amendments that Russians will vote on in April, including one that would outlaw gay marriage, another that would bar Russia from ceding territory, and one that would protect the "historical truth" of the people's "defense of the Fatherland." Analysts believe these amendments are meant to boost turnout for the referendum among Orthodox Christians and nationalists, and to mask the main reason for the constitutional rewrite: to keep Putin in power after his presidential term ends in 2024. Among the proposals is the shifting of authority to the State Council, a little-known body that Putin might take over. The territorial provision is meant to cement Russian sovereignty over Crimea, annexed from Ukraine in 2014, and the Kuril Islands, long claimed by Japan.

Cairo

Banning music: The authoritarian regime of Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi has banned *mahraganat*, a style of electronic folk music that is hugely popular among the country's poor. Mahraganat singers can no longer perform in public—including on Nile cruises and at weddings—and the government has asked YouTube to take down all mahraganat videos. Imams have issued a fatwa against listening to the music. The Egyptian Musicians Syndicate, which endorsed the ban, said the songs promote immorality and "encourage moral decline." The decision came in February after Hamo Bika's song "The Neighbor's Daughter" became a national hit and garnered 113 million views on YouTube. The lyrics include the line "If you leave me, I will drink wine and take hashish"—actions forbidden in Islam.

A wedding singer

AP (2), Reuters, AP

Tehran

Outbreak hot spot

Virus ravages leadership: Panic spread in Iran this week after state media reported that at least 23 lawmakers—nearly 10 percent of Iran's parliament—have come down with the coronavirus. Local media said that 92 Iranians have died and some 3,000 are infected, although the true figures are likely much higher. Iran's leadership is made up mostly of elderly men, who are most susceptible to complications from Covid-19. Mohammad Mirmohammadi, 71, a top aide to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, 80, died of the virus this week. Experts said Tehran had failed to restrict travel to and from China, its biggest trading partner and the country where the outbreak began, for fear of hurting Iran's already battered economy. Authorities have released tens of thousands of prisoners to prevent the virus from spreading through jails.

Zhengzhou, China

Slave labor: Members of China's Uighur minority are being forced to labor at factories that produce goods for major U.S. firms, including Apple, Nike, and Microsoft, according to a report by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI). Beijing has detained 1 million Uighurs, a mostly Muslim ethnic group from the western Xinjiang province, in re-education camps in an attempt to eradicate their culture. At least 80,000 have been sent to factories across China, including hundreds shipped to a Foxconn facility in Zhengzhou known as iPhone City, reports ASPI. The think tank says Xinjiang's regional government uses middlemen to arrange the work assignments. One ad from a labor dispatch company read "The advantages of Xinjiang workers are: semi-military–style management, can withstand hardship, no loss of personnel."

Hong Kong

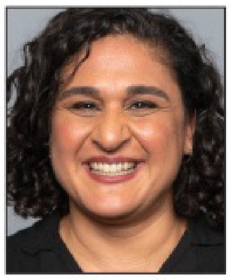
Bomb threats: Some pro-democracy protesters in Hong Kong are turning to terrorism to try to prevent mainland Chinese from spreading coronavirus in the semi-autonomous city. In recent weeks, homemade bombs have been found at least four times on trains that take workers from the mainland into Hong Kong; nobody has been injured. A group calling itself Frontline Protesters said the bombs were a warning "to those mainland zombies" who "come to my city under the tacit approval of the tyranny to spread the germs." Hong Kongers who rose up against their Beijing-backed government last year are now protesting the response to coronavirus, and demonstrators have clashed with police near quarantine sites.

Arriving in Hong Kong

Jerusalem

Netanyahu strengthened: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu this week took the lead in his country's third election in a year, but once again failed to secure the majority that he needs to form a ruling coalition. Even though Netanyahu will go on trial for felony corruption later this month, his Likud party nevertheless emerged as the largest faction, a stronger showing than in September. But a nearly complete vote count showed that his coalition of right-wing and religious parties had secured 58 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, three short of a majority. Netanyahu's main rival, Benny Gantz, leader of the center-right Blue and White, amassed 55 seats for his bloc. Netanyahu will get the first crack at forming a government and might try to woo Avigdor Lieberman's small Yisrael Beiteinu party, which opposes special privileges for Orthodox Jews—though that would require Netanyahu to drop the Orthodox parties from his bloc.

People

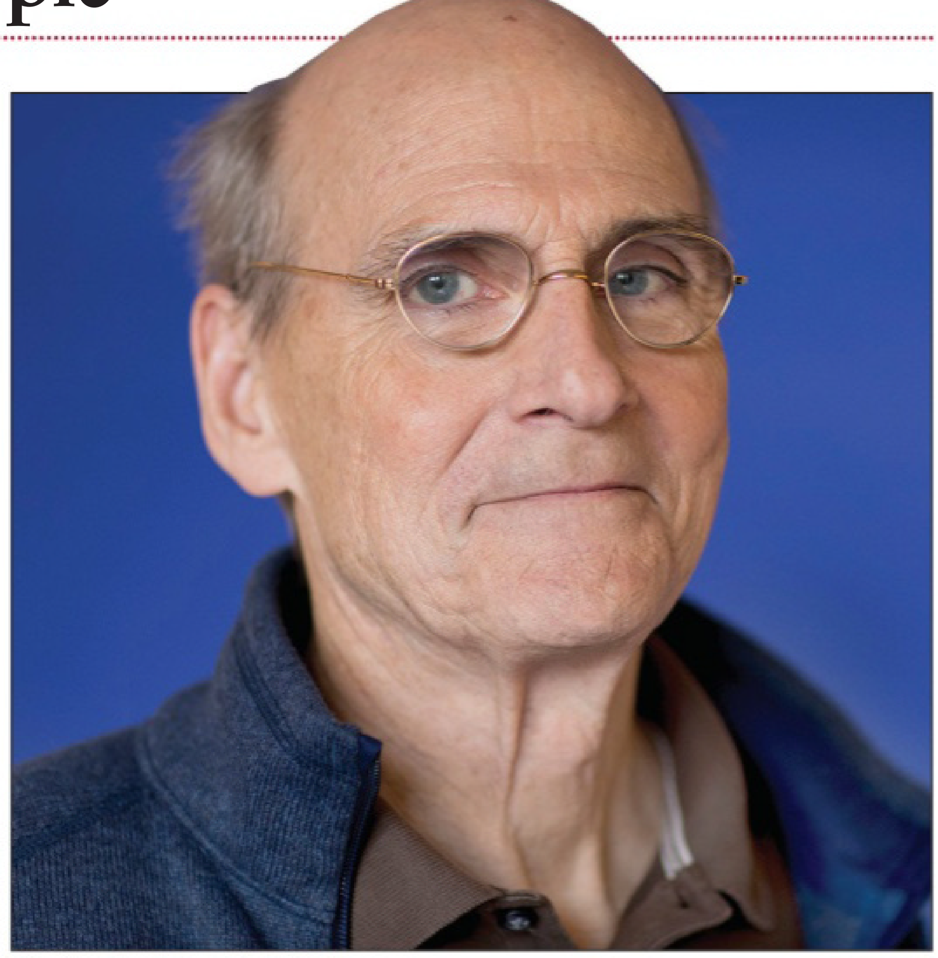


Samin Nosrat's 'superpower'

Samin Nosrat feels like she spent most of her life being invisible, said Helen Rosner in *The New Yorker.* As the child of Iranian immigrants who fled their country in 1976, the renowned chef and author of best-selling cookbook *Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat* says she grew up "a brown kid in a super-white world" in the affluent La Jolla neighborhood of San Diego. Nosrat, 40, says that during her formative years, she came to feel a profound sense of isolation. "I was called a 'terrorist' in second grade. I have never once been made to feel that I fit in among white people. I was always very aware that I was different, but I was also always trying very hard to fit in by being the nicest, the smartest, the most polite." Cooking became another way of pleasing people, and she admits to being startled by her career success and uncomfortable with fame. Her Netflix show based on her cookbook has become a sensation, with fans seemingly reveling in the time they spend with her as much as in what she has to say about cooking. Her eagerness to please is "a superpower," she said. "I do feel like I've always been asking the world, 'See me, see me, please.' And now I'm, like, 'Don't see me!'"

Staying alive in a war zone

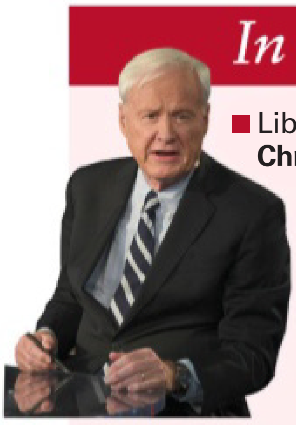
David Nott has seen humanity at its worst, said Jessamy Calkin in *The Sunday Telegraph* (U.K.). As a humanitarian war zone surgeon for nearly 30 years, the British doctor has treated the victims of barrel bombs in Syria, snipers in Bosnia, and child rape in Sudan. He once removed a detonator from a woman's leg; another time the nurse standing next to him was killed by a bullet. "Conflict work was the only thing that made me feel alive," he says, describing the experience as "joyous." The key to staying safe in the middle of a war zone, says the doctor known as "The Indiana Jones of Surgery," is developing ties to the embattled people in these communities. "You can't stop bullets or bombs," he says, "but you can develop relationships with people whereby they don't want you to die" or "be in a situation whereby your life is at risk." He's treated the consequences of human beings at their monstrous worst but says he's also witnessed extraordinary kindness, loyalty, and honor. "There are some people who use their power to make things better and have a positive effect on people's lives," he says, and "there are others who use power to destroy everything around them." But he still believes "the majority of humans are good."



How Taylor overcame addiction

James Taylor knew he was in trouble the first time he tried heroin, said Jenny Stevens in *The Guardian.* "One of the signs that you have an addiction problem is how well it works for you at the very beginning," says the singer-songwriter, 71. "It's the thing that makes you say, 'Damn, I like my life now.' That's when you know you shouldn't do it again." He'd grown up in a family haunted by addiction and mental illness, and at 16 spent nine months in a psychiatric hospital; two of his siblings later checked in for treatment. When Taylor came out, he set out for New York City and formed a band. It was then that he began using heroin, finding that it "took the edge off" his darker moods. His addiction overshadowed and eventually ruined his first marriage, to singer Carly Simon. "You marry an addict, you just have no idea who this person is, and he doesn't have any idea who he is, either," Taylor says. "It's terrible." He finally got sober with the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, but he says it was hours of running and rowing each day that finally ended his cravings. "It set me free," he says. "Physical exercise is the only antidote to feeling like you can't stand being in your own skin."

In the news



- Liberal political commentator **Chris Matthews** announced he was retiring and walked off the set of his MSNBC show this week, after a female guest accused him of making "creepy" comments to her in 2016. The network and Matthews, 74, reportedly agreed that he should step down. Journalist **Laura Bassett** said last week that while getting made up to appear on the show, Matthews, who's married, asked, "Why haven't I fallen in love with you yet?" Before another appearance, Bassett says Matthews complimented her dress and asked, "You going out tonight?" Matthews has faced several accusations of sexual harassment and alluded to that in his final monologue. "Compliments to women on a woman's appearance that some men, including me, might have once incorrectly thought were OK, were never OK," he said. After commercial break, the show resumed with fill-in host Steve Kornacki.

- **Vanessa Bryant** was "absolutely devastated" this week by reports that Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies passed around graphic photos of the remains of her husband, Kobe Bryant, and daughter Gianna at the site of their helicopter crash, her attorney said. Days after the Los Angeles Lakers legend, 41; Gianna, 13; and seven others died when Bryant's helicopter crashed into a hillside on Jan. 26, cellphone photos began circulating among law enforcement outside the crash probe, the *Los Angeles Times* reported. One citizen complained that a deputy was showing the cellphone images at a bar. Bryant's attorney, Gary Robb, called the display of photos "an unspeakable violation of human decency, respect, and of the privacy rights of the victims and their families."

- Queen Elizabeth II is "very sad" that **Prince Harry** and **Meghan Markle** are returning for their final acts as British royals this week without their 9-month-old son, Archie, *The Times* (U.K.) reported. The queen, 93, has seen her great-grandson sparingly since Harry, 35, and Meghan, 38, relocated to Canada's Vancouver Island and announced they're opting out of the royal family and their official duties. The couple will attend their last official engagement March 9 at Westminster Abbey to commemorate Commonwealth Day with the queen. After "Megxit" takes effect March 31, Harry and Meghan won't use official titles, but they still expect year-round protection at the cost of $20 million a year while living in Canada.

Alicia Canter/eyevine/Redux, AP (2)

The housing crisis

Millions of Americans can no longer dream of buying a home. Rental apartments are also unaffordable. Why?

What's gone wrong?

From cities to suburbs to rural America, the cost of housing has far outpaced increases in salaries. Home prices are growing at twice the rate of wages, and there are fewer houses on the market than in any year since 1982. The single-family house, with a garage and a front lawn, remains a bedrock of the American dream, even as it recedes from many people's reach. Young adults are one-third less likely to be homeowners than the previous generation was at the same age, and nearly two-thirds of renters say they can't afford a house. The median single-family house costs about $280,000, with demand driving prices at the lower end of the market to rise twice as fast as those of high-end homes. Once the backbone of U.S. wealth, housing has become a civic, economic, and environmental catastrophe.

A tent encampment in Seattle

Getty

Is renting any better?

It's even worse. Nearly half of renters are cost-burdened—meaning they spend at least 30 percent of their income on rent. Since 1960, renters' average earnings have increased 5 percent as rents have jumped 61 percent. Eleven million Americans spend more than half of their paycheck on rent. They have little choice: After 2011, more than 4 million units renting for $800 or less per month disappeared nationwide. In trendy cities like Seattle and Austin, older, multifamily buildings are being demolished or converted into condominiums and co-ops. A minuscule percentage of new apartments are low-rent. Today, a full-time minimum-wage worker can afford a two-bedroom rental in precisely zero U.S. counties; on average, it would take clocking 127 hours a week at the federal minimum wage to make paying for one possible.

Are expectations too high?

After World War II, home ownership went from a luxurious status symbol to a national priority. "A nation of homeowners, of people who own a real share in their own land, is unconquerable," President Franklin Roosevelt said in 1942. Zoning changes helped create the suburbs, as did improved cars and new roads, enabling people to live farther from work. Mortgage markets developed, and the rate of homeownership grew from 43 percent in 1940 to 66 percent by 2000. The size of houses per resident also doubled in that period. It became conventional wisdom to borrow as much as possible, buy the biggest house attainable, and hold on as the property steadily grew in value. But that's no longer feasible for many people: In 1990, 18 months of the median local salary could buy a house in 72 of America's 100 largest cities, Harvard University found. Now that's possible in just 25 of them.

What's jacking up costs?

Demand, above all. Houses are supposed to pass between generations, but Baby Boomers are living longer and staying put. People are also moving less than ever, down to 10 percent of the population annually. After the recession, private-equity firms and hedge funds spent an estimated $36 billion on more than 200,000 homes in ailing markets, and their strategy was to evict current residents and target the ultrawealthy. In New York City, homeless shelters have been filling at the same time towering new luxury condos rise into the skyline. Since 2011, the average cost of a New York condo rocketed from $1.15 million to $3.77 million. Even more perversely, nearly half of Manhattan's new luxury condos are empty.

Why not build more housing?

The cost of land and building materials such as timber and steel keeps climbing, and there are major shortages of construction workers. That makes it financially unfeasible to build low-income housing. In San Francisco, where the median one-bedroom rental goes for $3,700 per month, it costs $700,000 to build a single new apartment unit. "In a lot of cities, the market can't supply housing for people making less than six figures," said James Madden, a Seattle-based affordable-housing developer. Even when developers do seek to build dense rental or condo units with affordable prices, they run into NIMBY—the "not in my backyard" attitude of existing residents who insist that new construction and new residents will disrupt their views, schools, parking, and property values.

Can NIMBY be defeated?

Government initiatives can only achieve so much without current homeowners making concessions. California is plagued by crippling housing costs and widespread homelessness, but recently the legislature narrowly failed to pass a law that would have overridden local zoning rules to allow high-density housing. NIMBY is on vivid display in Lafayette, Calif., a wealthy town of 25,000 outside San Francisco. Gov. Gavin Newsom has said the state must build 3.5 million homes by 2025 to ease the affordability crisis, yet Lafayette residents were outraged by a proposal to build 315 new apartment units near a commuter train station. When developers and the city manager, Steve Falk, agreed to a compromise of 44 single-family homes on the site, residents went to court to fight that too. Falk resigned, saying he couldn't oppose such a modest plan amid a massive housing crisis. "My conscience," Falk said, "won't allow it."

The racial gap in home ownership

Scarce housing is behind a surprising number of social problems. Transportation accounts for about one-third of U.S. carbon dioxide emissions, and much of that is due to obscene commuting times in cities and suburbs with inadequate mass transit. (Four million Americans spend at least three hours every day driving to and from work.) There's a substantial racial gap among homeowners, with black and Hispanic Americans more than 25 percent less likely to own a home than whites. That gap, which is at least partly caused by redlining and racist lending policies, reinforces racial wealth disparities and impedes social mobility. The poor of all races are most affected by housing shortages and costs; by one estimate, there are now only 37 available affordable units for every 100 extremely poor households. In California, state lawmakers have allowed homeowners to convert garages into residential spaces and build small homes in their backyards, known as granny flats or casitas, that they can rent out. Ben Metcalf, the state's former director of Housing and Community Development, compares renting out parts of your property to growing "victory gardens" during World War II food shortages. "Your civic duty as a Californian," he said, "is you've got to convert your garage."

Best columns: The U.S.

The truth about Scandinavia

Fareed Zakaria
The Washington Post

Bernie Sanders insists his proposals are “not radical” and would simply refashion the U.S. into a Scandinavian-style social democracy, said Fareed Zakaria. But his depiction of Sweden, Norway, and Denmark is “highly misleading,” and “seems to be stuck in the 1960s and 1970s.” In that era, these countries’ social spending and economic regulation did soar. That experiment failed, with Sweden creating no new net jobs for 25 years. After major market reforms, Sweden and Norway today have vigorous, lightly regulated market economies, with no minimum wage and more billionaires per capita than the U.S. Yes, the Scandinavian countries still have a generous safety net, but funding it requires high tax rates on the middle class and the poor. Denmark, for example, has a top tax rate of 55.9 percent—and it kicks in at an income of $65,000. Scandinavian countries also fund their benefits through a national value-added tax of about 25 percent, which burdens the poor far more than the rich. The tax code in the U.S. is actually much more progressive than those in Scandinavia, with our top 10 percent of earners paying 45 percent of all income taxes, compared with 27 percent in Sweden. The workers’ utopia Sanders describes doesn’t exist.

Mayor Pete’s trailblazing presidential run

Tim Teeman
TheDailyBeast.com

Pete Buttigieg’s “historic” candidacy has forever changed America’s political landscape, said Tim Teeman. The former mayor of South Bend, Ind., ended his bid for the Democratic presidential nomination this week, after becoming “the first openly gay person” to win a primary state (Iowa) in U.S. history. With his characteristic eloquence, the 38-year-old Buttigieg candidly addressed his sexuality “in a way no other public figure has done.” He spoke lovingly about his husband, Chasten, whom he “kissed and embraced” at campaign events. He invoked his Christian faith to gracefully rebuff attacks from homophobic “bigots” like Rush Limbaugh. Sadly, it was fellow gays who were most openly critical of Buttigieg, scorning him as “too guarded,” too “nerdy,” and too eager to please heterosexuals. Mayor Pete, these detractors said, wasn’t “gay enough.” How shameful and disappointing. If my fellow gay people can’t accept Buttigieg “for who he is,” then they’re not truly in favor of diversity. The fight for equality is far from over, but Buttigieg’s candidacy has shown young people anxious about coming out that being gay is no longer a barrier to full participation in our society. “This is, one hopes, just a political beginning.”

Open partisan conflict on Supreme Court

Elie Honig
CNN.com

One of the unwritten rules of the Supreme Court is that you “never accuse your fellow justices of playing politics,” said Elie Honig. Justice Sonia Sotomayor recently broke that rule with “a blistering dissent” in an immigration case that was the equivalent of “a 96-mile-per-hour fastball buzzed under the chins of her conservative colleagues.” Sotomayor accused the court’s five conservatives of favoring “one litigant over all others” in agreeing 20 times to Trump administration requests to issue “emergency” rulings staying lower-court decisions. President Trump reacted by calling on Sotomayor and fellow liberal justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg to recuse themselves from any case involving him. That won’t happen, but “the partisan divide” on the court is now out in the open. In coming months, the Roberts court is expected to rule on such politically explosive issues as the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program for 800,000 “Dreamers”; abortion restrictions; gun rights; equal protection for LGBTQ people in the workplace; and whether Congress can obtain Trump’s tax returns. Will all these cases be decided by 5-4 rulings that favor “one litigant”? If so, Sotomayor “called it out first.”

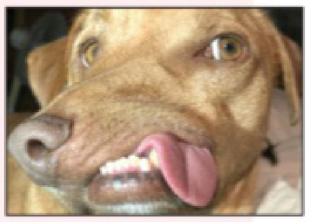
Viewpoint

“Even though we commonly assume that independents make up roughly a third of the electorate, the pool of persuadable independents is actually quite small, just 7 percent of the total electorate. This is because most independents admit to being ‘leaners’—bringing them into fairly reliable affiliation with the Republicans or the Democrats. Research shows these leaners think like, feel like—and, most important, vote like—‘soft partisans.’ In fact, many leaners are what political scientists Samara Klar and Yanna Krupnikov call ‘embarrassed’ partisans—people too ashamed to admit their partisan dispositions even to themselves.”

Rachel Bitecofer in NewRepublic.com

It must be true… I read it in the tabloids

■ A man with a tattoo on his forehead reading “Crime Pays” has been arrested and jailed in Indiana after leading police on a car chase for the second time in three months. Donald Murray, 38, was slapped with a raft of charges after this latest pursuit, in addition to those held over from his first, when he sped away from cops, crashed into a tree, and fled on foot. “He shouldn’t be hard to spot,” said a *Live PD* host at the time. “Look at this guy. That’s an outlaw right there.”



■ A dog with an off-kilter face named Picasso has become a social media darling for his resemblance to the famous artist’s cubist style. The 3-year-old pit bull–chihuahua-Pomeranian mix was born with “wry mouth,” a condition that slants his nose to the right and his jaw to the left. It’s not painful, and his adoptive owner, Liesl Wilhardt, said Picasso “can still do all the things other dogs can do,” as well as produce “amazing yawns” because of his unusual bone structure. “He’s perfectly imperfect,” she said.

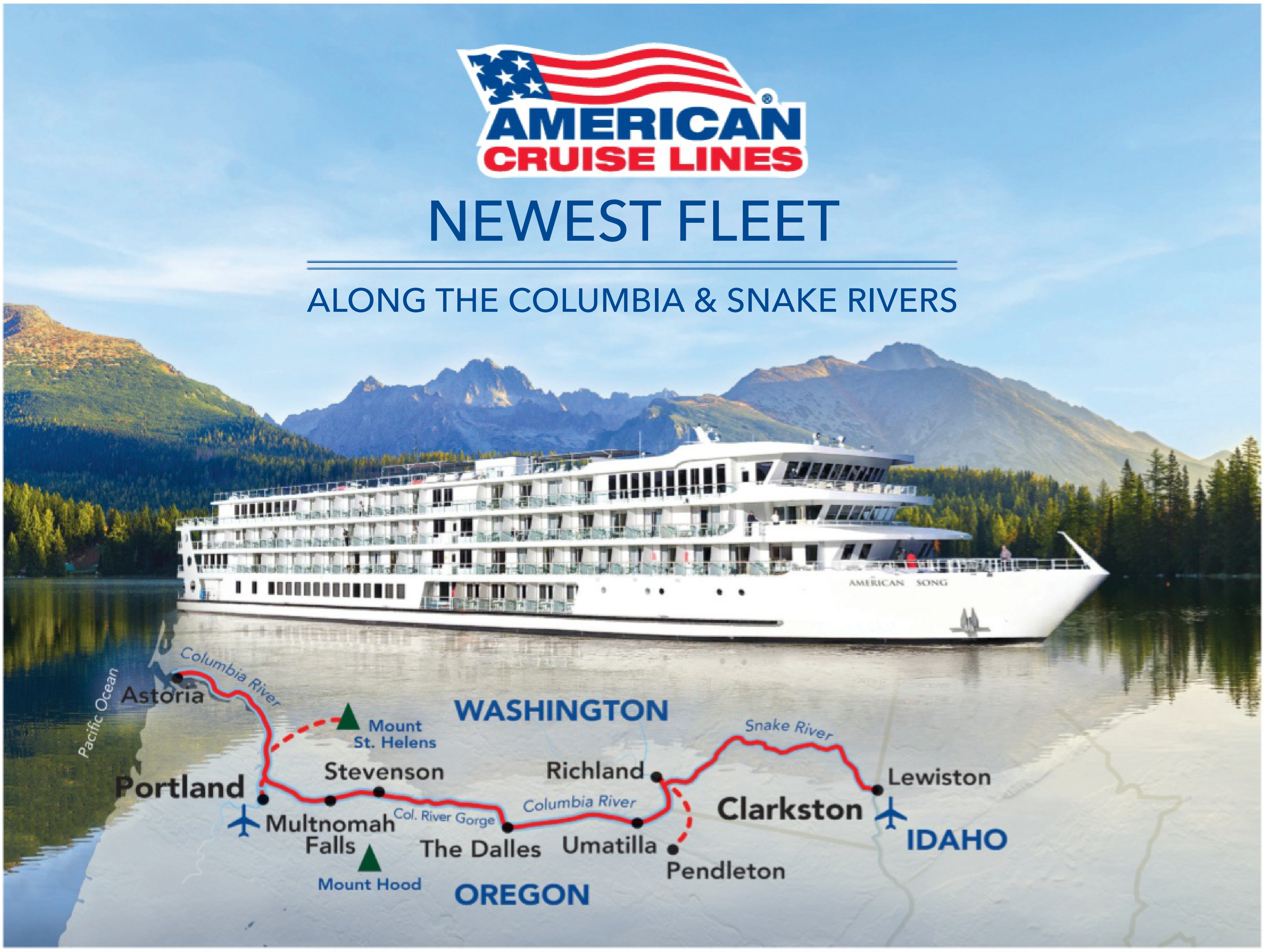
■ Britain’s “angriest man” has been sending opinionated letters to his local newspaper every day for the past 42 years. Bernie Carroll, 70, originally focused his “obsessive ramblings” on the Liverpool City Council, but soon expanded to topics like competitive eating, lip fillers, and doggie poo bags. He says he knows the 15,000 letters he’s written over the years (three or four of which are published each week) don’t lead to “actual change,” but they nevertheless help him “cope with all the anger” he has. He used to write his letters by hand and mail them, but says writing them as emails has made “being angry more affordable.”

SWNS

AMERICAN CRUISE LINES

NEWEST FLEET

ALONG THE COLUMBIA & SNAKE RIVERS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Columbia River
Astoria
Mount St. Helens
WASHINGTON
Snake River
Portland
Stevenson
Richland
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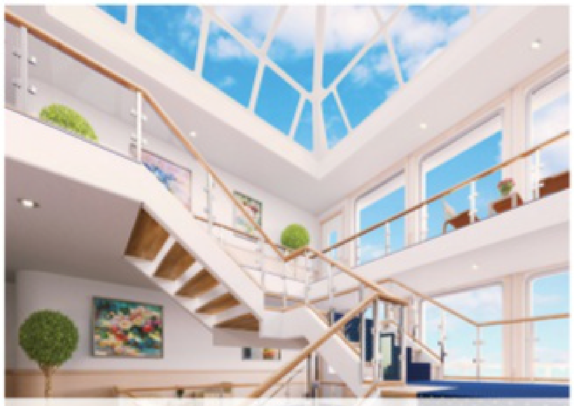

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UNITED KINGDOM

Panic over pedophilia wrecked lives

David Aaronovitch
The Times

The U.K. is just emerging from a witch hunt that saw dozens of innocent people smeared as child sex abusers, said David Aaronovitch. It all started in 2012, when Tom Watson—a senior member of the opposition Labour Party—told the House of Commons that there was “clear intelligence suggesting a powerful pedophile network linked to Parliament.” What followed was a spree of dubiously sourced, hysterical articles in our irresponsible tabloid media with headlines such as “I supplied underage rent boys for Margaret Thatcher’s cabinet ministers.” Many stories were based on the “florid fictional accounts of murders and rapes by senior political and military figures” supplied by Carl Beech, a former pediatric nurse. The government ordered an investigation that took years and cost more than $3 million. It concluded last week that there was no pedophilia ring, although authorities decades ago should have looked into credible allegations against two lawmakers, both long deceased. Beech’s lurid allegations against such luminaries as former Prime Minister Edward Heath and former Home Secretary Leon Brittan, however, were outright lies, and Beech—himself a pedophile—was sentenced to 18 years in prison for perverting the course of justice. The true scandal here isn’t one of sexual abuse but of lives ruined by a story concocted by “fantasists and liars, and exploited by careless journalists.”

GREECE

Migrants overwhelm our islands

Kostas Giannakidis
Protagon.gr

The migrant crisis is now causing “civil unrest” in Greece, said Kostas Giannakidis. On the Aegean islands of Lesbos and Chios, where most migrants land after setting sail from Turkey, locals protesting against the construction of more refugee camps fought pitched battles last week with Greek riot police. Dozens of civilians and officers were injured in the melee. The sight of the Greek state using violence against Greek protesters should chill us all. These islanders have seen “their lives partially destroyed” by a tidal wave of desperate newcomers from Syria, Iraq, and Central Asia. At first, locals pitied and welcomed the migrants, but as months have turned into years and Greek authorities have failed to tackle overcrowding—one Lesbos camp built to hold 2,800 people now houses more than 20,000, a third of them children—the refugees have turned to crime to survive. They break into shops, kill the islanders’ sheep and chickens, and chop down trees to burn for fuel. The situation has spiraled out of control. Athens promises to build “closed camps” to contain the migrants, but islanders don’t believe that is possible. They want the refugees transferred to mainland Greece, and after all the islanders have been through since the crisis began in 2015, they deserve that respite. Or has the government “decided to sacrifice the islands for the good of the mainland”?

Europe: Lockdowns spread with coronavirus

A triage tent outside a hospital in northern Italy

The “sense of emergency is growing,” said **Chiara Baldi** in ***La Stampa*** (Italy). In a matter of days, the number of coronavirus cases in Italy more than tripled to at least 3,000 this week, and the death toll rocketed above 100. The outbreak—likely sparked by travelers from China—began in the north but has now spread as far south as Sicily. Hundreds more Covid-19 infections have sprung up across the European Union, many of which have been traced back to Italy. The coronavirus has upended daily life here. At least 11 northern Italian towns have been placed under quarantine, and nearby hospitals say they are overwhelmed. In Milan, which isn’t officially locked down, bars and restaurants have been shuttered and public offices closed. Coronavirus is sickening our economy, said **Guido Fiorini** in ***Il Terreno*** (Italy). The disease has hit the tourism industry “like a tsunami.” Landmarks such as the Colosseum, usually packed with sightseers, are virtually empty. In Florence, all major conferences planned for March—more than 100 events—have been canceled. The impact of losing Chinese tourists is immense; they spent more than $720 million here last year. We can only hope that the wave recedes quickly.

France could soon see an outbreak on the scale of Italy’s, said **Valérie Mazuir** in ***Les Echos*** (France). Authorities understand that the 285 cases and four deaths we’ve seen so far are just the beginning. That’s why “large indoor gatherings have been prohibited” and events such as the Paris half-marathon have been canceled. We are instructed not to kiss one another upon greeting or even to shake hands. The Labor Ministry said businesses can mandate teleworking, and that workers whose children are ordered confined will be given automatic, government-compensated paid leave to care for them.

Europeans are reeling from the rate of acceleration, said **Jens Meifert** in the ***Kölnische Rundschau*** (Germany). Just a week ago, the virus seemed abstract, something happening far away in Asia. Now, we “can follow the spread of the virus in the chyron” on cable news. All day, all night, we’re being reminded to wash our hands and not to bother attempting to find masks. We hear of a new case in Cologne and wonder how many people she might have touched. But so far, there’s no need to panic. The Cologne patient, for example, “did everything right,” isolating herself and reporting immediately to the authorities. While we can’t halt the spread of the virus, we can certainly slow it down.

But are we overreacting? asked **Bart Eeckhout** in ***De Morgen*** (Belgium). Even if it spreads widely, it seems unlikely that more Europeans will die of the virus than of the flu, which claims up to 70,000 lives a year. Yet by “shutting off entire communities, school systems, and trade routes,” governments are “not only spreading panic but perhaps standing in the way of solutions.” After all, the health-care industry needs global trade in order to function. The effect of all these quarantines and cancellations “may turn out to be worse than the virus.”

AP

Middle East: Turkey and Russia clash in Syria

Civilians flee the fighting in Idlib.

The humanitarian catastrophe unfolding in northwestern Syria "is fast becoming a geopolitical one as well," said **Jonathan Marcus** in ***BBC.com***. In a brutal attempt to end the country's nine-year-old civil war, Syrian dictator Bashar al-Assad has been battling to retake Idlib, the last rebel-held province. Two years ago, it seemed as if Russia and Iran (Assad's main supporters) and Turkey (the main supporter of the rebels) had come to an understanding in the province, with all parties observing a cease-fire while keeping troops deployed in the area. Assad blew up that pact late last year, launching an offensive "backed by Russian air power and Iranian proxies" that has sent some 950,000 people fleeing toward the Turkish border. An alarmed Turkey took immediate action to halt the slaughter, adding thousands of reinforcements to its military contingent in Idlib. At least 33 of those soldiers were killed last week in a devastating airstrike on a Turkish convoy. "The Turks have been at pains to blame the Syrian Air Force," but many suspect Russian jets were responsible. Turkey has responded by shooting down two Syrian warplanes and carrying out hundreds of drone strikes on Assad-allied forces. "The scene is set for a full-scale confrontation between Turkey and Syria."

Ankara has found itself entirely alone with a crisis of its own making, said **Ahmad Haj Ali** in ***Argumenti Nedeli*** (Russia). Moscow showed goodwill after the airstrike, temporarily pulling back Russian forces so that the Turks "could bring out their dead and wounded." Yet Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan used that lull in fighting to go on the offensive and "create new martyrs" among the Syrian military. Erdogan has no friends who will join him in this fight. He has infuriated the European Union by opening his country's western borders, sending tens of thousands of Syrian refugees streaming toward Greece and Bulgaria, where they were greeted this week by barbed-wire fences and massed troops. And the U.S. is still mad at its NATO ally Turkey for buying an anti-aircraft missile system from Russia instead of the more expensive U.S. Patriot system. Without allies, Erdogan will have no choice but to abandon his Syrian misadventure.

It's outrageous that NATO has refused to help us, said **Hakki Ocal** in ***Daily Sabah*** (Turkey). We've accepted nearly 4 million Syrian refugees over the past decade, while the EU has taken in a paltry 1 million and the U.S. has shut its doors altogether. To prevent another influx, we tried to create a safe zone in Idlib—an act of "gallantry" that has put our brave soldiers in the line of fire. Unless he wants to get into a hot war with Russia, Erdogan will have to strike a deal with Russian President Vladimir Putin, said **Hannah Lucinda Smith** in ***The Times*** (U.K.). A new agreement creating a smaller safe zone in Idlib might allow Erdogan to claim a victory. "But Putin holds all the bargaining chips and will be certain to demand huge payback from Turkey in return."

INDIA

Bloody riots inevitable under Modi

Editorial
TheWire.in

Three days of anti-Muslim rioting left more than 40 people dead in northeast New Delhi last week, said *TheWire.in*, and the blame for those deaths lies with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The sectarian bloodshed began when Kapil Mishra, a local leader of Modi's Hindu supremacist Bharatiya Janata Party, warned Indian Muslims protesting a discriminatory new citizenship law to clear the streets or face "dire consequences." Armed Hindu mobs quickly went on the rampage, beating and shooting Muslims and burning their stores while police stood on the sidelines. It's true that Mishra was the lead instigator of the violence, but it is Modi's poisonous ideology that allowed a riot to turn into a massacre. His Hindu supremacism has permeated the capital's police, and it's now a habit of the Delhi force to stand by and watch pro-BJP mobs "run amok." We're seeing a repeat of 2002, when Modi was governor of Gujarat state, and police there did nothing to halt weeks of anti-Muslim riots that left some 800 Muslims dead. BJP leaders at all levels call those protesting the citizenship law traitors, and openly incite anti-Muslim hatred. At the cabinet level, the home minister doesn't criticize the police or the officials but rather the press, for reporting on the violence. This deliberate effort "to polarize the country on religious grounds" will surely claim more lives.

CANADA

This isn't Merrie Olde England

Heather Mallick
Toronto Star

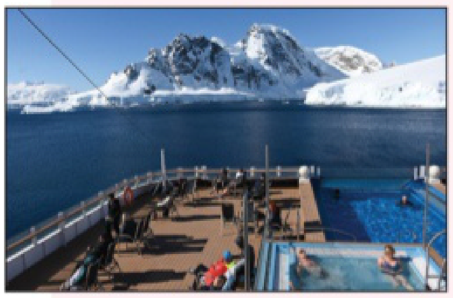
Ontario Premier Doug Ford is gleefully trying to start political fights by being "pointlessly annoying," said Heather Mallick. Ford's Progressive Conservatives recently forced through a rule change that requires all state lawmakers to sing "God Save the Queen" in the legislature on the first Monday of each month. The rule took effect this week, and several indigenous members refused to sing along. New Democrat Sol Mamakwa said the revival of the British national anthem was an attempt to glorify "a hurtful and violent colonial past," an era that "sought the destruction of cultures, languages, and communities." Ford, of course, was delighted by the refusal, because it gave him and his cronies an excuse to huff, "Oooh, look, he's insulting our queen." But in fact most Ontarians agree with Mamakwa that the anthem, indeed the entire royal family, is "an anachronism, a reminder of an era long past its Best Before date." When the queen dies, the song will become "God Save the King" and refer to the "absurd Prince Charles." Are Canadians really expected to sing that we hope Chuck will long reign over us? Who among us could manage that "without laughing"? Requiring obeisance to the crown is a ridiculous gesture—and Ford has made himself ridiculous by insisting.

AP

Noted

■ Ad spending on the 2020 presidential primary has already surpassed $1 billion—the most money spent in U.S. history this early in an election cycle. Democratic candidates have spent a combined $969 million—with $724 million of that total spent by the campaigns of billionaires Michael Bloomberg and Tom Steyer. Experts predict that candidates of both parties will spend a total of $10 billion on political ads before Election Day.
Axios.com

■ The Justice Department is creating a new arm focused on revoking the citizenship of immigrants who lied or omitted information on their applications. The new Denaturalization Section will target "terrorists, war criminals, sex offenders, and other fraudsters," the department said.
CNN.com



■ Antarctica tourism is booming. More than 56,000 tourists visited the remote region during the 2018-19 season, and above 78,000 are expected for the current season—twice as many as a decade ago. Most come by cruise ship, leaving from ports in Argentina or Chile.
The New York Times

■ Two South Carolina school districts have become the first to install airport-style body scanners to screen arriving students for weapons. Last year, there were at least 45 shootings at schools in the U.S., an average of nearly one a week.
Slate.com

Afghanistan: A real peace deal?

Peace to Afghanistan
Agreement for Bringing Peace to

U.S. envoy Zalmay Khalilzad with Taliban leader

The "truly momentous" deal the U.S. and the Taliban signed this week could mean America's longest war is nearing an end, said **Kathy Gilsinan** in ***TheAtlantic.com***. But the U.S. will come away with nothing close to victory—just the beginning of a new process that will give the Taliban a share of power in Afghanistan. In the deal, the Taliban agrees not to harbor al Qaida or other terrorist groups and to enter talks with the U.S.-backed Afghan government. The U.S. will reduce its forces from more than 12,000 troops to 8,600 in the coming months, and aim for a full withdrawal by spring 2021. Signed 18 years after we set out to "annihilate the Taliban," after $2 trillion spent and more than 3,500 American and allied lives lost, the deal is a tacit admission that "for the U.S., getting out of Afghanistan will mean lowering the bar."

This is "an exit deal, not a peace deal," said **Steve Hayes** in ***TheDispatch.com***. Negotiated, at the Taliban's insistence, without the Afghan government's participation, it's "loaded with American concessions to our longtime jihadist foe." We'll lift our sanctions and promise to help lift international sanctions too. Some 5,000 Taliban prisoners are supposed to be released—a provision Afghan President Ashraf Ghani has understandably balked at. Our withdrawal is supposedly contingent on the Taliban's ongoing compliance, said **Max Boot** in ***The Washington Post***. But President Trump "is plainly itching to leave" and is likely to pull the troops regardless of what happens, "just so he will have something to brag about with voters."

This so-called peace deal may be "an illusion," said **Fred Kaplan** in ***Slate.com***. After the seven-day "reduction in violence" ended, the Taliban resumed its offensive with a bombing that killed three people at a soccer match. Clearly, the Taliban is not to be trusted. "The echoes of Vietnam are clear," said ***The New York Times*** in an editorial. Our 1973 exit from that war left the South Vietnamese government to be overrun. But that parallel does not change the fact that a military victory over the Taliban is not possible, so it's time for us to leave. It's a flawed deal, but "with so little to show after all these years, it's hard to see what wiser path America could follow."

Covid-19: How to reduce your risk

"It's not overreacting to prepare for the coronavirus," said **Kelsey Piper** in ***Vox.com***. With the number of cases in the U.S. escalating, health-care professionals recommend a number of sensible steps that can reduce your risk of infection. First—and most importantly—wash your hands frequently. Studies have shown coronaviruses can survive on surfaces for two hours to nine days. The Centers for Disease Control recommends a vigorous, 20-second wash with soap and water; if a sink isn't available, you can use hand sanitizer. And, for goodness sake, stop touching your face, said **Colleen Kraft** in ***CNN.com***. As an infectious-disease physician, I know that we touch our face "an average of 15 to 23 times an hour," mostly unconsciously; and since we "also touch door handles, subway poles, handrails, saltshakers, other people's hands, and grocery carts," we risk infection by doing so.

Shaking hands, kissing friends hello, and sharing plates are bad ideas, too, said **Heather Murphy** in ***NYTimes.com***. Researchers believe that the virus usually hitches a ride on "a droplet of mucus or saliva" to spread, so standing even 3 feet from a sick person is risky. But skip the face masks, said **Christina Colizza** in ***TheWirecutter.com***. At best, commercially available "cloth or latex" face masks reduce the chances of sick people spreading the virus through coughing and sneezing, but they do little to protect the wearer from tiny airborne virus particles. "A properly fitted N95 respirator mask," which filters out 95 percent of airborne particles, would provide protection, but even professionals require training to ensure they're wearing it right.

You need not cancel air travel if your destination is not a coronavirus hot zone, said **Scott McCartney** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. Most airplane cabins use "hospital operating-room-grade" filters that remove viruses and bacteria from circulated air; it's a good idea to aim the vent at your face so you're breathing filtered air on a plane, and to clean your tray table and armrest with disinfectant wipes. You're only at higher risk if you're seated near an infected person. In case you or your environs are quarantined, said **Maria Godoy** in ***NPR.org***, you should lay away enough soup, beans, and other dry goods to "carry you through for a couple of weeks." The same is true for prescription medications. But hoarding is unnecessary and anti-social. And start making contingency plans in case offices, schools, and day-care centers are closed.

Reuters, Getty

Border shooting: Mexican nationals can't sue

Hernández's mother at the site of his killing

Reuters

The U.S. Supreme Court just "shut the courthouse door" on the family of a 15-year-old Mexican boy shot dead by a Border Patrol agent, said the *Los Angeles Times* in an editorial. In a 5-4 decision written by Justice Samuel Alito, the court's conservative majority ruled that the parents of Sergio Adrián Hernández had no standing to sue. Since the 2010 incident occurred at the border, Alito said, it was "an international incident" with "a clear and strong connection to national security," which is the province of Congress and the president. Hernandez's family says he and friends were playing in a dry culvert of the Rio Grande and posed no threat. The agent, Jesus Mesa Jr., claimed the teen "had pelted him with rocks" before he fired two shots across the border into Mexico, fatally hitting Hernandez in the face. The Justice Department absolved the agent, and although he was charged in Mexico with murder, the U.S. refuses to extradite him for trial.

This decision "goes far beyond" border security, said **Anya Bidwell** and **Nick Sibilla** in *USAToday.com*. For 200 years, both citizens and foreigners "successfully sued federal officers" in state court for abusing their authority. But since 1988, officers have enjoyed "absolute immunity from tort claims" in state venues under the Westfall Act. This leaves federal court as the only option when U.S. officials "go rogue." The Hernandez family had a clear precedent to sue, said **Ian Millhiser** in *Vox.com*. In 1971, a Brooklyn man named Webster Bivens successfully sued federal agents who illegally searched his home without a warrant. But not only did Alito rebuff the Hernandez family's "Bivens action," as it's called, but Justice Clarence Thomas wrote a separate opinion, joined by Justice Neil Gorsuch, arguing "the time has come to consider discarding the *Bivens* doctrine altogether."

Don't blame the court, said **A. Benjamin Spencer** in *TheHill.com*. It has expressed its doubts about the *Bivens* decision for years, making it necessary for Congress to explicitly authorize the right of foreigners to sue U.S. federal agents. Justices shouldn't be expected to fill the void from the bench. The implications of this ruling are both grave and "perverse," said **Madiba Dennie** in *The Washington Post*. Border agents will hear the message loud and clear: They are free "to kill noncitizens across the border with impunity."

Sanders: His fondness for leftist dictators

Bernie Sanders sure is "consistent," said **Jonah Goldberg** in the *New York Post*. The socialist senator has been finding the bright side of authoritarian regimes for 50 years, and continues to defend them as a front-runner for the Democratic presidential nomination. Asked on *60 Minutes* about his praise in the 1980s for Fidel Castro's Cuba, Sanders doubled down, saying, "He had a massive literacy program. Is that a bad thing?" Last week, Sanders credited Communist China for taking "more people out of extreme poverty than any country in history," adding, "That is the fact. End of discussion." Not quite. China adopted market-economy reforms only after Mao Zedong's central planning failed, and "an estimated 45 million died from a man-made famine." When Castro came to power in Cuba, said **David Harsanyi** in *National Review.com*, he "canceled elections, terminated the free press," and turned Cuba into an "island prison." The fact that Sanders defends Castro and Mao tells you "who he is right now."

Sanders' praise of China, Cuba, and the Soviet Union "is easy to mock," said **David Corn** in *MotherJones.com*. But he formed his views of these countries during the 1980s, when the Reagan administration was waging a Cold War assault on emerging socialist regimes in Latin America. In reaction to U.S. imperialism, Sanders "probably swung too far in the other direction," but his comments have to be judged in the context of that era. Young adults who support Sanders have no memory of the Cold War, said **Annie Lowrey** in *TheAtlantic.com*, and for them, "the Red Scare is no longer so scary." When Sanders promotes "democratic socialism," they think of Denmark, not Castro. "Facing yawning inequality, heavy debt burdens, obscene costs of living, and stagnant wages, young people have warmed up to redistributive politics."

But Sanders isn't a naïve 20-year-old, said **David Brooks** in *The New York Times*. He was an adult when communist regimes "enslaved whole peoples" and ordered "mass executions and intentional famines." That makes his stubborn sympathy for the Soviet Union, China, Cuba, and Nicaragua "morally unfathomable." Like other populists of both the Left and Right, he believes that "revolutionary mass mobilization" will oust the "irredeemably corrupt" establishment and rule by "majoritarian domination." No wonder he keeps defending Castro and Mao: They essentially share the same worldview.

Wit & Wisdom

"What exists, exists so that it can be lost and become precious."
Poet Lisel Mueller, quoted in BrainPickings.org

"In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible."
George Orwell, quoted in TheBulwark.com

"Two errors; one, to take everything literally; two, to take everything spiritually."
Mathematician Blaise Pascal, quoted in TheGuardian.com

"The tyranny of a prince in an oligarchy is not so dangerous to the public welfare as the apathy of a citizen in a democracy."
Philosopher Montesquieu, quoted in The Washington Post

"The particular charm of marriage is the duologue, the permanent conversation between two people who talk over everything and everyone till death breaks the record."
Critic Cyril Connolly, quoted in ArtsJournal.com

"We have all a better guide in ourselves, if we would attend to it, than any other person can be."
Jane Austen, quoted in BookRiot.com

"The secret of dealing successfully with a child is not to be its parent."
Cartoonist Mell Lazarus, quoted in Parade

Poll watch

■ **79%** of American voters say treatment for Covid-19 should be free for everyone, and **65%** say that if there were a vaccine available, they would get it. **56%** approve of President Trump's handling of the crisis thus far.
Morning Consult

■ **33%** say they are scared they might contract Covid-19, while **60%** say they are not. **42%** have increased their hygiene, including washing hands frequently.
YouGov

Repression: Big Brother's internet shutdown

Kashmiri journalists protest an internet shutdown.

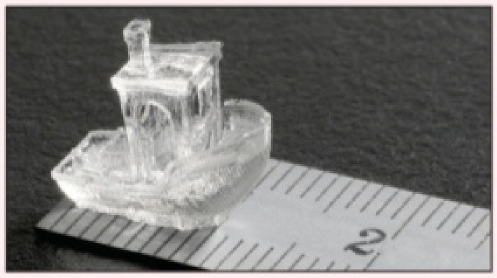
100 DAYS NO INTERNET
100 DAYS NO INTERNET

If you've ever wondered how daily life would go on without access to email, social media, GPS, or any internet service at all, said **Pranav Dixit** in ***BuzzFeed News.com***, it's happening now in Kashmir. Since Aug. 5, Indian authorities have kept the people of Kashmir in a nearly total "digital blackout." They flipped the switch to "prevent public opposition from turning into open rebellion" after the Indian government split the Muslim-majority state of Jammu and Kashmir into two territories and curbed its autonomy. "Overnight, mobile phones and landlines stopped working, broadband lines were frozen, and text messaging stopped." Despite a ruling from India's Supreme Court that the blackout was unconstitutional, mobile data and social media—except for a few "government-approved websites"—remain blocked for almost everyone. The digital dead zone has led to chaos: Doctors and hospitals struggle to acquire supplies, drug smugglers can't be tracked, and local media has ground to a halt; the region's oldest and largest newspaper has not updated its website since December.

Such crackdowns on access are growing in frequency around the world, said **Feliz Solomon** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. Last year, "parts or all of the internet were shut down at least 213 times in 33 countries, the most ever recorded," according to the nonprofit Access Now. In 2016, the United Nations declared in a nonbinding resolution that internet access is a human right, but even private-sector telecom companies, "which rely on government licenses and agree to follow a nation's laws, rarely push back." Government officials can pull the plug "by ordering service providers to block certain areas from receiving signals," said **Joe Tidy** and **Becky Dale** in ***BBC.com***. Another form of blackout is "throttling," which "happens when a government slows down data services" from, say, 4G to 2G, "making it impossible to share videos or livestream." The goal is similar to that of a full shutdown: "Stifle the flow of information online—and crack down on any potential dissent offline."

Technology's promise for democracy is looking more like a curse, said **Andrea Kendall-Taylor** in ***Foreign Affairs***. The rise of the internet and social media fostered great optimism that autocrats could no longer "maintain the concentration of power their systems depend on." But authoritarian regimes are "evolving," employing tools such as AI-powered surveillance to curb protest and marshaling social media to shape public perception. Rapid technological change in the near future will keep citizens and governments in a "cat-and-mouse dynamic" to gain the upper hand. Believers in democracy need "new ideas, new approaches, and the leadership" to withstand "intensifying digital repression."

Innovation of the week



A new 3D printer can produce a model in seconds, said Ron Amadeo in *ArsTechnica.com*. Existing 3D printers have proven to be great for prototyping and other pursuits, "but they sure can take a while"—often hours or days. That's because they work in a "layer-by-layer process" in which a 3D model is effectively "sliced into hundreds of 2D horizontal layers and slowly built up, one layer at a time." But a new technique developed by researchers at École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne in Switzerland can "build the entire model at once" through a technique called rotational printing. A "photosensitive resin" inside a sealed rotating container is blasted by a laser from multiple angles simultaneously to harden portions of the resin into the desired shape.

Bytes: What's new in tech

Silicon Valley naming and shaming

"A parody Twitter account is getting under the skin of some Silicon Valley venture capitalists," said Biz Carson in *Protocol.com*. Since starting in November, the account, @VCBrags, has amassed 39,000 followers with a simple "shtick": "Retweet boastful posts from VCs, and top them with three withering hand-clap emojis." The account really took off after the new year, when "VC Twitter went predictably wild doing grand lookbacks about the decade and their achievements." The account's popularity has spawned a handful of unrelated "cousins," such as @CEOBrags, @Founder Brags, and @VCComplaints. Some venture capitalists with a sense of humor have even begun tagging @VCBrags in their own tweets. Others are less amused. One angry VC who blocked the account said it is "basically shaming people who were celebrating wins."

No free speech rights on YouTube

A federal appeals court in California rejected the argument that tech platforms are bound by the First Amendment, said Jacob Gershman in *The Wall Street Journal*. In a blow to conservatives who have claimed that YouTube, Twitter, and Facebook censor conservative content, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals backed a limited view of the First Amendment's speech protections that "put constraints on government, not the private sector," with rare exceptions. "The 9th Circuit was emphatic: This case was no exception." The case concerned a YouTube channel run by Prager University, a nonprofit "that produces short explainer videos promoting conservative ideas." In 2017, Prager sued Google after YouTube "flagged dozens of its videos as 'inappropriate,'" including clips with such titles as "Why Isn't Communism as Hated as Nazism?" and "Are 1 in 5 Women Raped at College?"

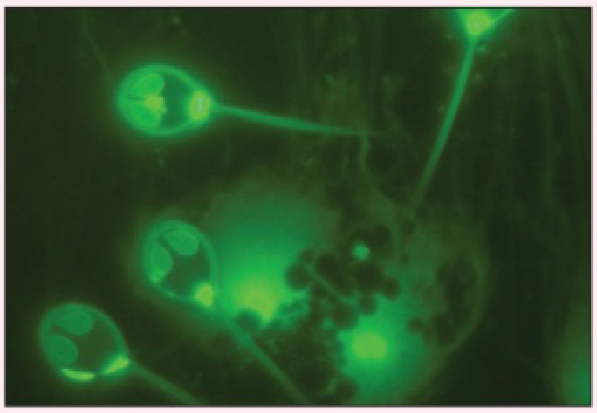
High-tech baby monitors see pushback

Pediatricians are pushing back against AI-powered baby monitors in the nursery, said Drew Harwell in *The Washington Post*. Some parents swear by monitors such as Cubo AI that use "always-on cameras, microphones, thermometers, motion sensors, and speakers" to "gather round-the-clock data on newborns and send alerts to parents when they detect crying, vomiting, or signs of distress." But experts say the increasingly popular systems mainly "prey on the fears of young parents" and there is "little evidence that AI-powered baby monitors lower the risk of suffocation or sudden infant death syndrome."

Reuters, EPFL

The animal that doesn't need oxygen

Scientists have discovered the first known animal that doesn't require oxygen to survive, reports *USA Today*. Closely related to jellyfish, *Henneguya salminicola* is a common parasite that lives within the muscle tissue of salmon. When a team of Israeli researchers sequenced the genes of this creature, they were stunned to find that—unlike every other known multicellular organism on Earth—these parasites don't have the DNA machinery needed to perform aerobic respiration. They're missing mitochondria, the powerhouses that sit inside cells and use oxygen to generate energy. The researchers believe that because *H. salminicola* live inside fish, they have evolved to survive without traits common to most multicellular species. "They have lost their tissue, their nerve cells, their muscles, everything," says study co-author Dorothée Huchon, from Tel Aviv University. "Now we find they have lost their ability to breathe." Huchon is unsure how the parasite survives without oxygen and speculates that it may somehow absorb energy from its host. Whatever the explanation, *H. salminicola* might not be the only nonbreathing animal out there. A study published a decade ago speculated that loriciferans, a group of microscopic organisms that live in deep ocean sediment, also have no mitochondria. That finding hasn't yet been confirmed, and a genomic analysis is currently underway.



H. salminicola: *Alive but not breathing*

A 'wake' for a dead elephant in Botswana

Death and the elephants

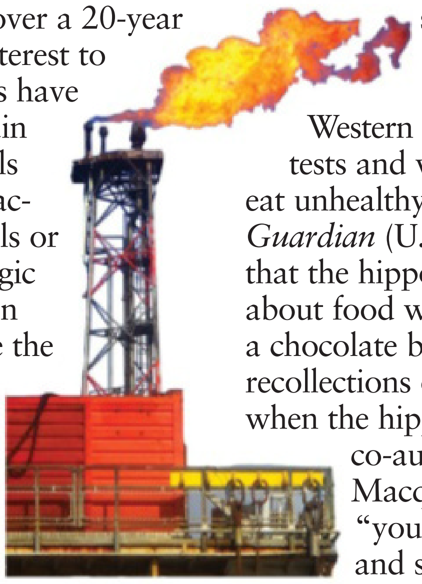
Wildlife books and documentaries are full of accounts of elephants mourning their dead, a human behavior that it is almost impossible for us to confirm in another species. But a study into how these giant beasts react to loss has concluded that elephants appear to feel *something* when a fellow tusker dies—even one they're not related to. Researchers examined elephant reactions to 32 different carcasses across Africa, reports *The Washington Post*. They witnessed elephants touching corpses with their trunks, trying to lift them with their feet, and performing dominance behaviors typically used to protect sought-after resources such as plentiful fruit trees or shady groves. Scientists also observed a 10-year-old elephant walking away from the body of her mother with liquid streaming from her temporal glands, a sign of stress, fear, or aggression. Over the next three weeks, members of five elephant families interacted with the corpse. "We don't know what's going on in their heads," says co-author Shifra Goldenberg, from the San Diego Zoo's Global Institute for Conservation Research. "But we do know that they're constantly updating social information about each other."

Mars gets the shakes

Ten months after NASA announced that its InSight lander had detected seismic activity on Mars, the space agency has revealed this "Marsquake" was far from a one-off. Since then, InSight has recorded more than 450 significant seismic events, including 24 with a magnitude of 3 or 4. That means Mars is less seismically active than Earth but more so than the moon. "The larger quakes at this point seem to be less frequent than we had expected," InSight chief investigator Bruce Banerdt tells *New Scientist*. Mars doesn't have tectonic plates, so the quakes are likely caused by the Red Planet losing heat. This makes it contract, which causes Mars' outer skin to fracture. The NASA team says there is no pattern to the quakes but that they have noticed a slight increase in smaller tremors—a sign, perhaps, that their frequency is linked to the Martian orbit or some other natural phenomenon. InSight's discoveries aren't limited to quakes: The lander also detected more than 10,000 whirlwinds in its vicinity, some of which may have reached a mile into the sky.

Mystery methane emissions

New research suggests that the oil and gas industry is a far greater contributor to climate change than previously thought because the sector's methane emissions have been seriously underestimated. Methane's warming effect is 80 times more potent than that of carbon dioxide over a 20-year period, so it's of particular interest to climate scientists. Researchers have long debated whether the main source of rising methane levels in the atmosphere is the extraction and burning of fossil fuels or natural emissions from geologic sources—leaks from the ocean floor, for example. To resolve the question, scientists dug up more than 2,000 pounds of ice cores from Greenland's ice sheet and then sucked out methane-containing air bubbles that had been trapped in the ice from before the Industrial Revolution. Levels of geologic methane should have remained relatively stable over the past few hundred years, and the scientists found that emissions from this source were far lower than estimates used to calculate global emissions, reports *The New York Times*. That means methane emissions from human activity have been underestimated by 25 to 40 percent. Lead author Benjamin Hmiel, from the University of Rochester, says this "gigantic discrepancy" highlights the need for the oil and gas industry "to, at the very least, improve its monitoring."

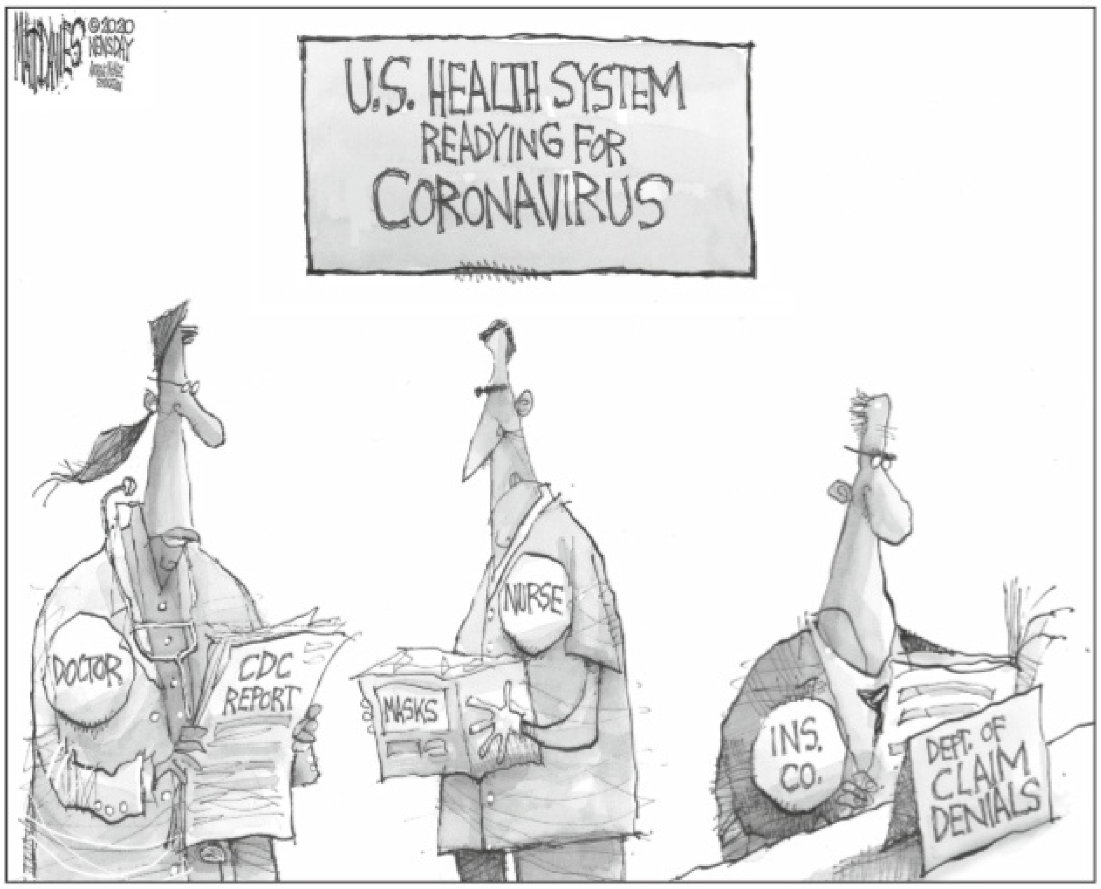


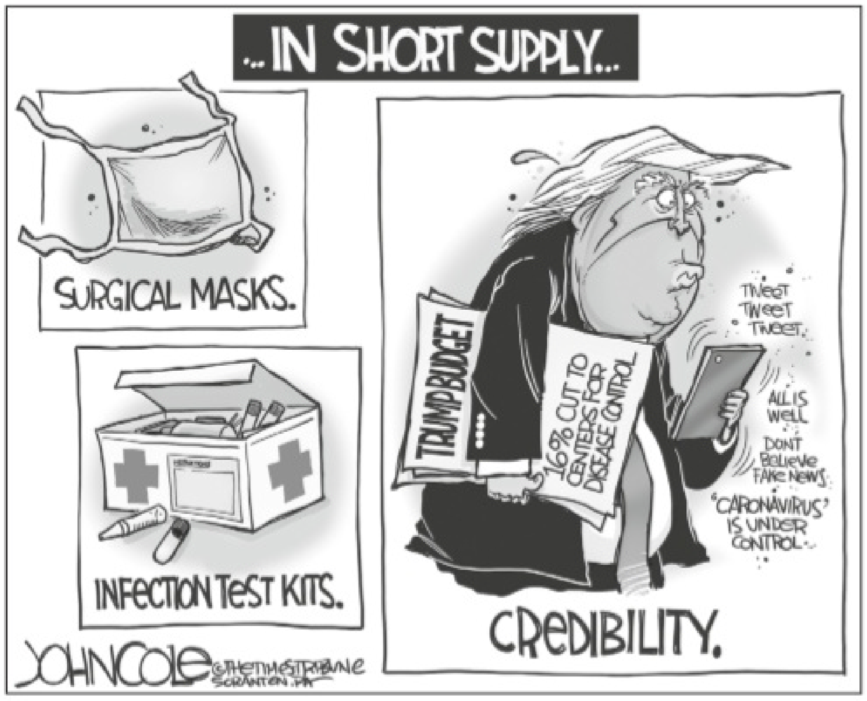
Health scare of the week
Western food makes you stupid

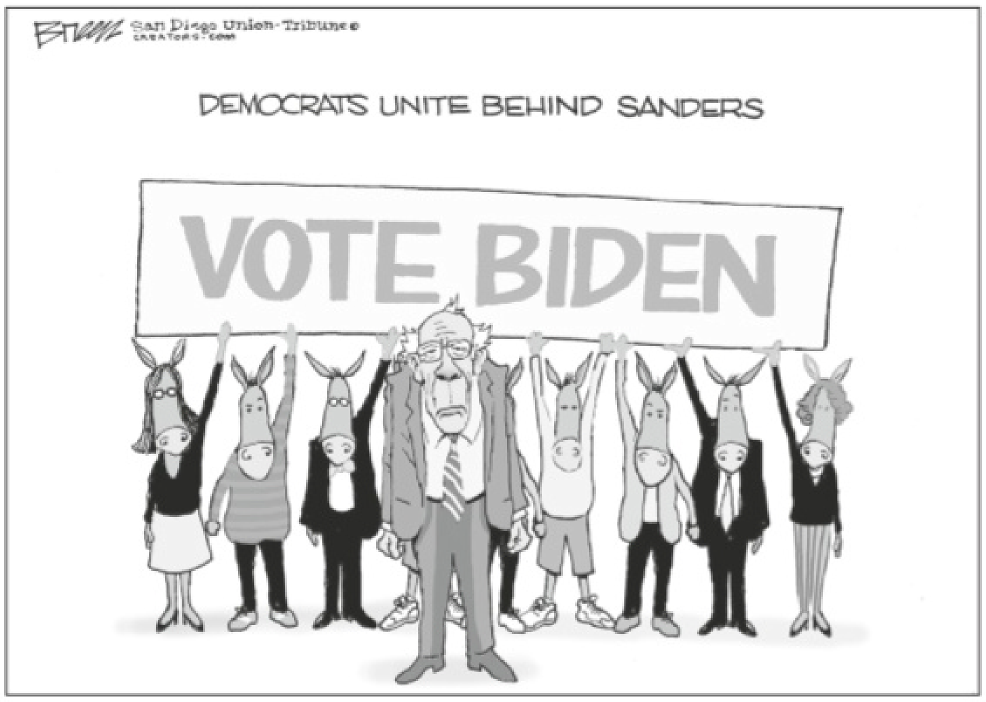
Eating a Western diet for as little as a week can harm brain function and encourage you to overeat, a new study suggests. Previous research on animals has shown that junk food can affect the hippocampus, the brain region associated with memory and appetite control. To explore whether the same was true in humans, researchers recruited 110 volunteers, all in their early 20s and with a generally good diet. They told half the participants to keep eating their normal diet, and put the other half on a Western diet high in saturated fat and added sugar—predominantly fast food and Belgian waffles. After seven days the subjects on the Western diet scored worse on memory tests and were more likely to want to eat unhealthy foods when full, reports *The Guardian* (U.K.). The researchers speculate that the hippocampus weakens memories about food when you're full, so looking at a chocolate bar won't inundate you with recollections of how great candy tastes. But when the hippocampus is damaged, says co-author Richard Stevenson, from Macquarie University in Sydney, "you get this flood of memories, and so food is more appealing."

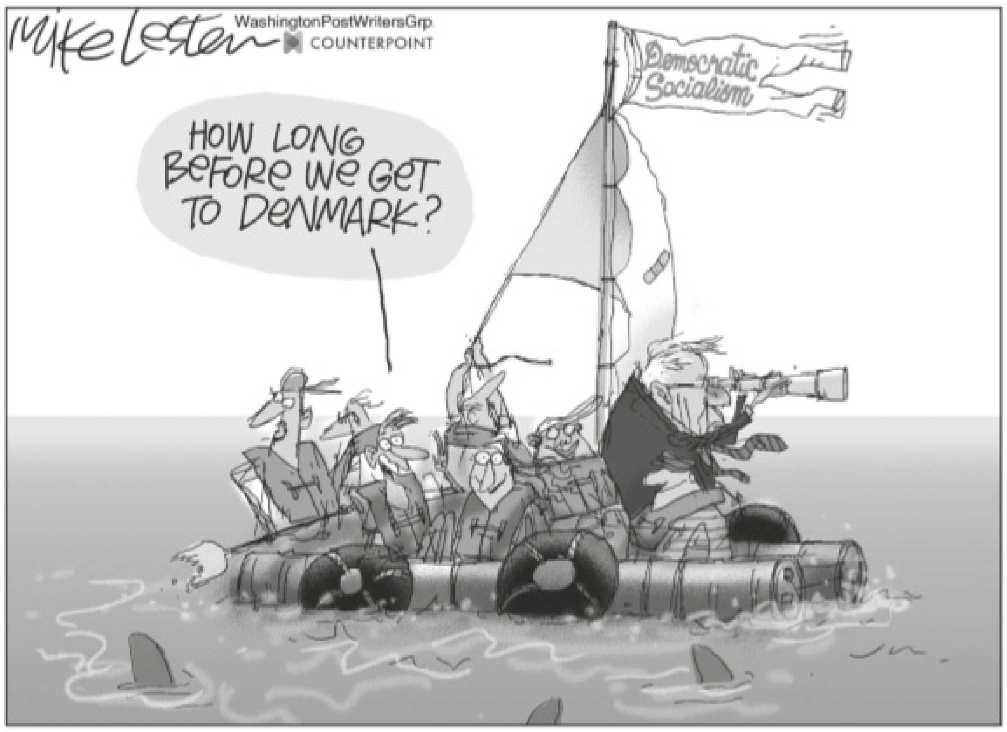
Stephen Douglas Atkinson, Science Source, Wikipedia

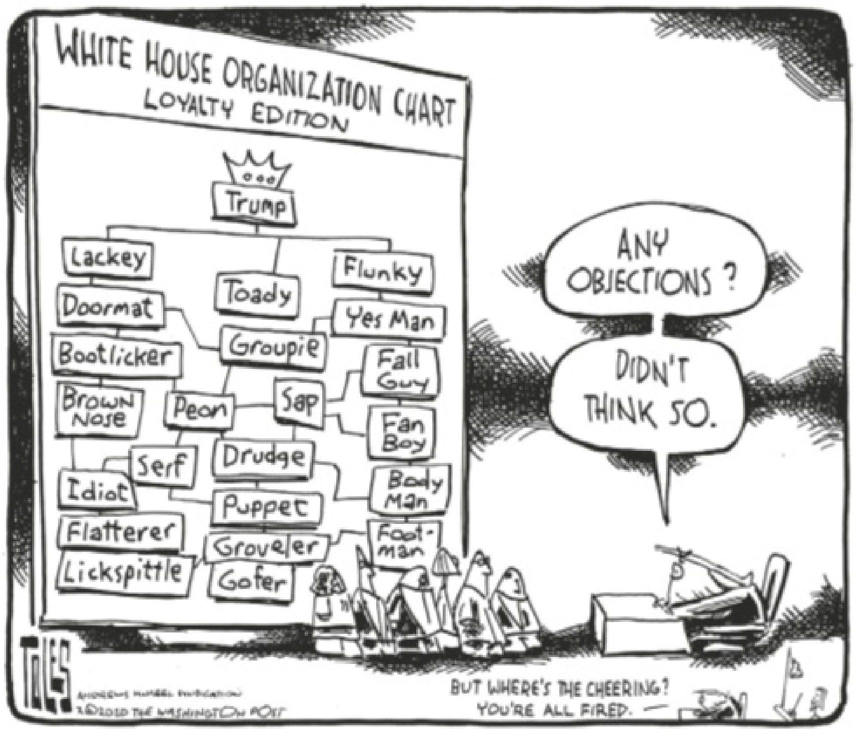
Pick of the week's cartoons


MATSON ©2020 NEWSDAY
U.S. HEALTH SYSTEM READYING FOR CORONAVIRUS
DOCTOR
CDC REPORT
NURSE
MASKS
INS. CO.
DEPT. OF CLAIM DENIALS


...IN SHORT SUPPLY...
SURGICAL MASKS.
INFECTION TEST KITS.
TRUMP BUDGET
16% CUT TO CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL
TWEET TWEET TWEET
ALL IS WELL
DON'T BELIEVE FAKE NEWS
'CARONAVIRUS' IS UNDER CONTROL
CREDIBILITY.
JOHN COLE ©THE TIMES-TRIBUNE SCRANTON, PA


BREEN San Diego Union-Tribune © CREATORS.com
DEMOCRATS UNITE BEHIND SANDERS
VOTE BIDEN


Mike Lester WashingtonPostWritersGrp COUNTERPOINT
Democratic Socialism
HOW LONG BEFORE WE GET TO DENMARK?


WHITE HOUSE ORGANIZATION CHART
LOYALTY EDITION
Trump
Lackey
Flunky
Toady
Doormat
Yes Man
Bootlicker
Groupie
Fall Guy
Brown Nose
Peon
Sap
Fan Boy
Serf
Drudge
Idiot
Puppet
Body Man
Flatterer
Groveler
Foot-man
Lickspittle
Gofer
ANY OBJECTIONS?
DIDN'T THINK SO.
BUT WHERE'S THE CHEERING? YOU'RE ALL FIRED.
TOLES ANDREWS McMEEL SYNDICATION ©2020 THE WASHINGTON POST

For more political cartoons, visit: www.theweek.com/cartoons.

Review of reviews: Books

Book of the week

The Decadent Society: How We Became the Victims of Our Own Success

by Ross Douthat (Avid Reader, $27)

“It’s hard to think of a current book that is as insightful about the way we live now as is this one,” said **Rod Dreher** in ***TheAmericanConservative.com***. “Offering provocative thoughts on almost every page,” *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat brushes aside the popular notion that America and the rest of the industrialized West are in crisis. Instead, he says, we are living in an age of decadence, a condition he defines as creative and economic stagnation experienced by a prosperous society. Decadence isn’t hedonism, in other words, and catching it isn’t fatal. The Roman Empire, he points out, lasted 400 years in a state of decadence. Besides, stagnation and stability often go hand in hand. But stasis does generate a malaise, caused by the loss of a sense of purpose, and Douthat’s “rich, intelligent” book offers no clear way out.

The comforts of complacency

Media Bakery

Whether or not you’re a conservative, as Douthat is, “the broad strokes of his argument will be familiar,” said **Jake Bittle** in ***The New Republic***. To put it in shorthand: “The global economy is anemic, our domestic birth rates have plummeted, no one invents anything useful anymore, and Disney is making too many remakes.” His complaints about contemporary pop culture are so predictable, they remind you that wise men have been claiming all is meaningless noise since Ecclesiastes. But his book’s second half is “far more memorable,” because it delivers the “very Douthanian” argument that we may have lucked into a decadence that’s unusually sustainable. Revolution from within is unlikely, he says, because the young and the dispossessed have been tranquilized by pornography, video games, and drugs.

Douthat isn’t a fan of stasis, said **Peter Thiel** in ***FirstThings.com***. His book, in fact, “sets the stakes for the most urgent debate of the 2020s” by demonstrating that our most pressing problem is that we have lost our faith that we can create a better future. But when speculating about the form salvation might take, he singles out religious revival and interstellar travel, which explains his book’s sardonic final sentence: “So, down on your knees—and start working on that warp drive.” Perhaps Douthat “does not, after all, take any of this stuff very seriously.” But the rest of us don’t have to also just shrug. We could be setting goals that are ambitious yet attainable, like finding a cure for cancer. “It is a paradox of our time,” in fact, “that the path to radical progress begins with moderation.”

Novel of the week

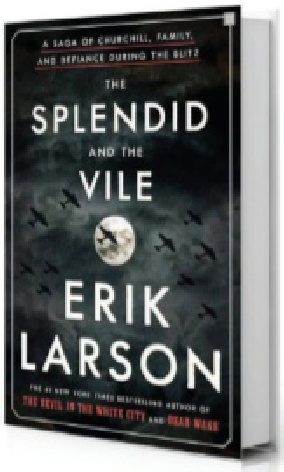
Djinn Patrol on the Purple Line

by Deepa Anappara
(Random House, $27)

This brilliant new novel “announces the arrival of a literary supernova,” said **Lorraine Adams** in ***The New York Times***. It’s easy to link Deepa Anappara’s storytelling genius to her background as a reporter in Mumbai and Delhi, but to talk solely of her eye for detail misses “the heat and mystery” of her prose, and the way the voice of her street-raised 9-year-old protagonist “somersaults on the page.” Jai, who lives in a smog-shrouded shantytown, is a crime-show buff who upon learning that one of his classmates has gone missing decides to investigate, enlisting two friends. The novel’s courageous and cheeky young narrator “keeps you on the edge of your seat,” said **Sana Goyal** in the ***Los Angeles Review of Books***. He doesn’t understand everything around him and initially can’t rule out that djinn (aka genies) are snatching kids his age. But as the child disappearances multiply, he understands enough to illuminate for the reader the injustice and negligence that define his existence. “Sometimes, children are wise beyond their years.”

The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz

By Erik Larson (Crown, $32)


A SAGA OF CHURCHILL, FAMILY, AND DEFIANCE DURING THE BLITZ
THE SPLENDID AND THE VILE
ERIK LARSON
THE #1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF THE DEVIL IN THE WHITE CITY AND DEAD WAKE

“There are countless books about World War II, but there’s only one Erik Larson,” said **Michael Schaub** in ***NPR.org***. In his new 600-page bestseller, the author of *The Devil in the White City* once again has taken the myriad parts of a complex true story and fashioned them into a narrative that’s “nearly impossible to put down.” His subject is Britain’s darkest hour—the year spanning May 1940 to May 1941. Germany invaded three European countries on the very day that Winston Churchill was named the nation’s prime minister, and eight months of German bombing soon followed. Churchill is the book’s central character, but Larson circles outward to deepen our understanding of both the protagonist and his country.

“The entire book comes at the reader with breakneck speed,” said **John Reinan** in the Minneapolis ***Star Tribune***. “So much happened so quickly in those 12 months”: Britain “snatched salvation from defeat” on the beaches of Dunkirk; Churchill delivered his legacy-making speeches; the Blitz killed some 50,000 Britons and turned landmark buildings to rubble. Larsen meanwhile weaves in multiple dramas playing out in Churchill’s family and inner circle. His debt-burdened son misses the birth of a first child while sleeping with his mistress, inspiring the wronged wife to bed the handsome U.S. envoy who became her second husband. The voices of ordinary Britons are heard, too, drawn from thousands of archived war diaries.

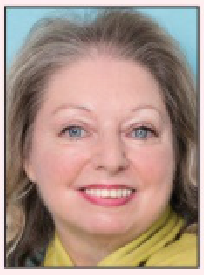
Still, “this is a rather old-fashioned book,” said **Gerard DeGroot** in ***The Washington Post***. Larson, an American, “falls victim to English propaganda,” the myth that England and its pastoral elite rallied the lower classes to claim an unlikely victory. In truth, it was Britain’s industrial might, its brave working-class warriors, and their many colonial compatriots that turned back the Nazi threat. “Larson is a superb storyteller,” and you’ll happily follow his Churchill as he juggles scandal inside his own family with a Herculean effort to save the free world. “It’s fascinating and entertaining, but it’s not remotely the real story.”

The Book List

Author of the week

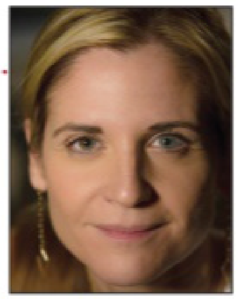
Hilary Mantel

Hilary Mantel has a 750-page answer for her doubters, said **Alex Clark** in ***TheGuardian.com***. The two-time winner of the Man Booker Prize apparently read the speculations that she had grown reluctant to kill off the 16th-century figure she had brought back to life in the two novels that transformed her from a critics' darling to a defining talent of her generation. But *The Mirror & the Light*, the fat new book that completes Mantel's *Wolf Hall* trilogy, arrives only two years behind schedule and brings to 2,000 the number of award-worthy pages she's published on Thomas Cromwell since 2009. "I've got quite amused at people suggesting I have writer's block," she says. "I've been a factory!" She also bristles at the idea that she blanched at marching Cromwell to his foreordained beheading. "It's this version in which the woman writer is sentimentally attached to her creation," she says. "As opposed to the male writer who just wants his check."



Mantel actually wrote about Cromwell's beheading shortly after she started the first novel, said **Alexandra Alter** in ***The New York Times***. The ending was there, in other words. "All I had to do was fill in the middle," she says, laughing. But it's true that Cromwell has been an obsession since years before *Wolf Hall*. Mantel sensed that history had undervalued the blacksmith's son who by ambition, cunning, and brilliance rose to be Henry VIII's right-hand man and much more. And though she is, at 67, eager to take on new subjects, she knows her masterwork is behind her. For Mantel, writing the novels was no struggle. It was, she says, "like at last delivering what's within you...an enormous shout from a mountaintop."

Best books...chosen by Glennon Doyle



Glennon Doyle's new memoir, Untamed, *describes her life today with her current spouse, soccer star Abby Wambach. Below, the ex–mommy blogger and best-selling author of* Love Warrior *recommends 'soulful, life-changing' works of nonfiction.*

Know My Name by Chanel Miller (2019). I sat down to read this memoir intending to bear witness to the story of a survivor of sexual assault. Instead, I found myself falling into the hands of one of the great writers and thinkers of our time. Miller is a philosopher, a cultural critic, a deep observer, a writer's writer, and an artist. If we are lucky, this will be the first of many world-changing pieces of art that this woman produces.

Just Mercy by Bryan Stevenson (2014). *Just Mercy* affected me more deeply than anything I've read in the past decade. It broke my heart, widened my perspective, and deepened my conviction. Stevenson and his colleagues at the Equal Justice Initiative, a legal practice he created to defend the poor and unjustly accused, are American heroes.

Everything Happens for a Reason by Kate Bowler (2018). Bowler's writing is naked, elegant, and gripping. Halfway through, I closed the book, turned to my wife, and said, "I have to call someone to find out how this ends. I need to know before I keep reading if she's OK." I don't think she wrote this book to save anybody; she was just telling the truth about her life. Yet I finished her story feeling more present, grateful, and much less alone. Which, for me, is art in its highest form.

Native by Kaitlin B. Curtice (2020). Curtice is a vital poet, storyteller, and unapologetic truth teller, and this forthcoming book is required reading for all those committed to learning the truth about the land we live on and its institutions. It both stretched me and comforted me, and will remain on my shelf forever.

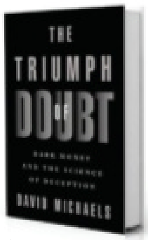
I'm Still Here by Austin Channing Brown (2018). With this book, Brown introduces herself as a master memoirist, delivering a manifesto that will live on shelves beside Ta-Nehisi Coates and Michelle Alexander. It has the power to break open hearts and minds.

The Book of Longings by Sue Monk Kidd (2020). I kept having to close this novel and breathe deeply, again and again. A radical reimagining of the New Testament that reflects on women's longing and silencing and awakening, it is a true masterpiece.

Also of interest...in justice and lies

The Triumph of Doubt

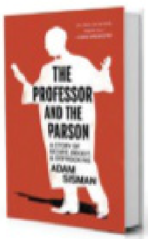
by David Michaels (Oxford, $28)



Big Tobacco was only the first, said Sheril Kirshenbaum in *ScienceMag.org*. In this "tour de force" history, epidemiologist David Michaels trots out "account after account" of how findings about public health dangers have been undermined and obscured by corporations and wealthy individuals. Michaels "pulls no punches"—castigating Volkswagen, the NFL, and others for their deceits. Though it's all true, "there are moments when *The Triumph of Doubt* feels more like fiction than reality."

The Professor and the Parson

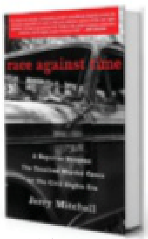
by Adam Sisman (Counterpoint, $26)



The titular parson in this nonfiction work "emerges as a quite despicable, though endlessly fascinating, character," said Patricia Hagen in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. Robert Parkin Peters—an ordinary Englishman on the surface—spent 60 years inflating his credentials, marrying multiple times, and jumping from church to church despite having been defrocked. Celebrated historian Hugh Trevor-Roper kept a file on Peters after being duped. This entertaining book pieces the whole story together.

Race Against Time

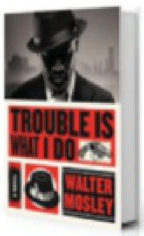
by Jerry Mitchell (Simon & Schuster, $28)



Jerry Mitchell is a hero, said Randall Kennedy in *The New York Times*. In this "vivid" account of four civil rights–era crimes and the arrival of justice decades later, the Mississippi reporter can't avoid presenting himself as a catalyst. His dogged efforts led to trials for, among others, Medgar Evers' killer and two of the men who bombed the 16th Street Baptist Church. Though Mitchell could have raised even more questions, he's turned his life's work into a "brave, bracing, and instructive" memoir.

Trouble Is What I Do

by Walter Mosley (Mulholland, $26)



When there's a dangerous job to do in Walter Mosley's latest crime series, "McGill is the man for the job," said Bruce DeSilva in the Associated Press. Private eye Leonid McGill plays courier in the latest entry, with much at stake. A 92-year-old black bluesman has put his own life in danger because he wants a letter delivered that will reveal he is the biological father of a racist New York City bank owner. The memorable characters and Mosley's "uniquely lyrical writing style" carry the plot home.

Els Zweerink, Scott Sherratt

Made in New Hampshire.
Enjoyed in Switzerland.

Fuller's Sugarhouse in Lancaster, New Hampshire, uses Google Ads to sell its products to customers around the world who are in search of pure maple syrup.

Grow with Google

American businesses are growing with tools and training from Google.

google.com/economicimpact

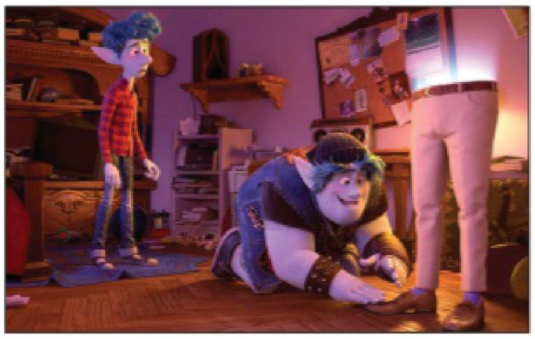
Review of reviews: Film & Music

Onward

Directed by Dan Scanlon
(PG)
★★★☆

Two elf brothers learn to move past regret.

Pixar's first original feature since 2017's *Coco* is a "touching, lovingly crafted oddity," said **Justin Chang** in the ***Los Angeles Times***. An unlikely mashup of "an ancient storybook quest, a rowdy '80s-flavored buddy comedy, and an out-and-out male weepie," it finds "glimmers of real enchantment and honest feeling" in its tale of two brothers trying to reconnect with their dead father. In a contemporary suburban landscape populated by trolls and other mythic creatures, Ian, an awkward teenage elf, and his goofy older brother are bequeathed an enchanter's staff that they use to restore their father to life—but wind up getting only his bottom half. In search of a fix, they set off on an adventure. Though Tom Holland and Chris Pratt handle the voicework admirably, the movie "never really takes flight," said **A.A. Dowd** in ***AVClub.com***. It "keeps veering off into mild detours," and Ian's story arc feels schematic. But if parts "come close to Pixar on autopilot," the ending is "transcendent," said **Kevin Maher** in ***The Times*** (U.K.). Writer-director Dan Scanlon, who based the movie on memories of his own father's premature death, hits an emotional bull's-eye that makes for painful viewing—"but in the best way."



Ian, Barley, and Dad's better half

The Burnt Orange Heresy

Directed by Giuseppe Capotondi
(R)
★★☆☆

An art collector enlists a critic in a silk-glove crime.

Yes, that's Mick Jagger in a supporting role. But this new art-fraud thriller "works best as a kind of screen test" for its paired co-stars, said **Guy Lodge** in ***Variety***. Claes Bang plays a Milan-based art critic who toys with tourists to pay the bills; Elizabeth Debicki follows him home and into bed one day and proves his equal in clever banter. Indeed, when this film darkens halfway in, "you may wish Bang and Debicki had been around to make elegant little mystery capers with Alfred Hitchcock." Jagger plays an art collector who invites the couple to his Lake Como estate, and his Cassidy is "an extraordinary figure—wicked, wrinkled, flute-thin, with a smile too big for his head," said **Anthony Lane** in ***The New Yorker***. "There's not a weak link in the cast," because the reliably sonorous Donald Sutherland plays the hermit artist at the center of Cassidy's scam. Then the twists begin piling up in a way that alters the tone and makes a sacrifice of Debicki's obvious intelligence, said **Boyd van Hoeij** in ***The Hollywood Reporter***. The "somewhat underwhelming" close doesn't ruin the movie, though. It's "a mutt of sorts but no less a pleasure to spend some time with."

Jagger's timeless seducer

Soccer Mommy

Color Theory
★★★☆

Sophie Allison's leisurely paced, guitar-based songs are "as intimate as journal entries," said **Mark Richardson** in ***The Wall Street Journal***. On her second album, the young songwriter who records as Soccer Mommy often makes anxiety, depression, and her mother's illness her subjects, yet "her unerring ear for melody makes each track feel like an open door that invites listeners in." *Clean*, her 2018 debut, wound up on many critics' Top 10 lists; this record is "even stronger." As a lyricist, Allison "has a skill for following winding syntax to a sharp point," said **Jayson Greene** in ***Pitchfork.com***. But here her music, though brighter and fuller, lacks the surprising strum patterns and one-to-one immediacy of *Clean*. The songs feel anthematic, except that they lack a voice shouting from the rafters. The penultimate track, "Stain," conveys the old urgency. Elsewhere, "she has yet to locate this power within the glossy peaks of the new sound she has churned up."

Caribou

Suddenly
★★★★

Dan Snaith, the Canadian-born, London-based dance-music guru who records as Caribou and Daphni, "has spent 20 years now mixing festival-tent ecstasy with heartfelt interiority," said **Rob Harvilla** in ***TheRinger.com***. Still, his first Caribou album in five years feels like his most personal yet. It's also "extravagantly rewarding whether you think about it way too hard or hardly think about it at all." It provides close listeners with magician-like cuts between piano arpeggios and thundering EDM, yet it's also loaded with pop earworms. The album's signature move is a sudden warping of the music, said **Alexis Petridis** in ***TheGuardian.com***. But Snaith has also pushed his "fragile, unshowy" vocals to the forefront, and doing so "turns out remarkably impactful." His unpredictable career has ended up in an exciting niche—a place "where electronic auteur meets singer-songwriter, where an innate feel for pop music and the dance floor co-exists with experimentation."

Grimes

Miss Anthropocene
★★★☆

Grimes' latest "sounds like a pulled punch from an artist whose superpower used to be her sonic and conceptual fearlessness," said **Judy Berman** in ***Time***. "By no means a bad album," *Miss Anthropocene* presents itself as a deliberately perverse celebration of global warming, and it contains several strong tracks of arty electronic pop that again prove the 31-year-old singer-producer who records as Grimes "could bend and meld genres in her sleep." Still, the 10-song set doesn't hang together "as tightly as a concept record should," and the lyrics don't meet the concept's ambition. "Even if it's not always as vivid as some of her earlier albums," said **Heather Phares** in ***AllMusic.com***, "*Miss Anthropocene* is often fascinating." Its opening track "begins by rolling in like a blanket of smog," and much of what follows is "a murky mix of ethereal, nu-metal, and industrial-inspired sounds that call to mind a thoroughly polluted world."

Disney, Sony Pictures Classics

Movies on TV

Monday, March 9

Blue Valentine

Michelle Williams and Ryan Gosling do all they can to break your heart in this drama about the demise of a once beautiful romance. (2010) *8 p.m., the Movie Channel*

Tuesday, March 10

Monterey Pop

Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, Otis Redding, and the Who kick off a new rock era at the 1967 festival that inspired Woodstock. And filmmaker D.A. Pennebaker was there. (1968) *6:30 p.m., TCM*

Wednesday, March 11

Spotlight

Rachel McAdams, Michael Keaton, and Mark Ruffalo lead a top ensemble cast in the Oscar-winning drama about the team of reporters who exposed widespread child abuse in Boston's Catholic archdiocese. (2015) *8 p.m., the Movie Channel*

Thursday, March 12

Snatch

Brad Pitt leads a tough-guy cast in Guy Ritchie's stylish caper about London gangsters vying for a rare diamond. (2000) *9:35 p.m., Epix*

Friday, March 13

First Man

Ryan Gosling wows again, here playing astronaut Neil Armstrong as a taciturn man, touched by tragedy, who's tapped to realize humanity's dream of reaching the moon. (2018) *7:35 p.m., Cinemax*

Saturday, March 14

All the President's Men

Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman play the reporters who brought down Richard Nixon in the best newsroom drama until *Spotlight*. (1976) *8 p.m., TCM*

Sunday, March 15

Hobbs & Shaw

Two old nemeses from the *Fast & Furious* franchise team up to thwart a cyber-enhanced terrorist. With Dwayne Johnson, Jason Statham, and Idris Elba. (2019) *6:35 p.m., HBO*

• *All listings are Eastern Time.*

The Week's guide to what's worth watching

Cosmos: Possible Worlds

It's time to travel billions and billions of light-years through the universe again. Forty years after the PBS docuseries *Cosmos* made astrophysicist Carl Sagan a global star, co-creator Ann Druyan has dreamed up a 13-part third season that also brings back a Sagan protégé as host. Neil deGrasse Tyson, who starred in the series' 2014 return, will once again board the Ship of the Imagination, but with a new mission: to place us in the history of the cosmos in order to speculate about our distant future. *Monday, March 9, at 8 p.m., National Geographic*

Blood

Being up to date on this award-winning Irish crime series isn't a St. Patrick's Day requirement, but maybe it should be. As Season 2 begins, ex-doctor Jim Hogan returns to the small town where the death of his wife a year earlier tore the family apart after one of the couple's adult daughters questioned the cause of death. Now older daughter Fiona is showing symptoms like her mother's, and when she drives a car into a canal, police have a whole new set of questions. *Available for streaming Monday, March 9, Acorn TV*

Women of Troy

They were a team of Helens and they could flat-out ball. In the early 1980s, when money began pouring into women's sports, the University of Southern California's Women of Troy raced to prominence with a talented group led by forward Cheryl Miller, who could shoot, defend, and yes, dunk, like few before her. This inspiring documentary revisits the team's years of dominance, and how its play paved the way for the WNBA. *Tuesday, March 10, at 9 p.m., HBO*

The Pale Horse

Looking for a *Knives Out*–style whodunit with a supernatural bent? This adaptation of an Agatha Christie novel offers eeriness and foreboding to spare. Rufus Sewell stars as a widowed and well-pressed antiques dealer whose name is found on a list inside the shoe of a murder victim. When he begins investigating on his own, the trail leads him to a trio of witches living together in a former inn and to a strong suspicion that the people on the list are in line to die. *Available for streaming Friday, March 13, Amazon Prime*

Blood's *Adrian Dunbar: A father with secrets*

Flack

Every misbehaving celebrity could use a fixer as ruthless and effective as this show's title character. In Season 1, Anna Paquin commanded the screen as an unscrupulous PR whiz who can clean up the worst mess of any client but can't quit her own bad habits. Paquin's co-stars have needed more to do, and the arrival this year of Martha Plimpton, Sam Neill, and Daniel Dae Kim could signal the fix that *Flack* itself has needed. *Friday, March 13, at 10 p.m., Pop TV*

Other highlights

Stargirl

America's Got Talent winner Grace VanderWaal assumes the title role in a teen drama about a boldly eccentric newcomer who becomes the object of a shy boy's affections. *Available for streaming Friday, March 13, Disney+*

World of Weapons

A history of long-range weapons, starting with a Roman spear. *Sunday, March 15, at 9 p.m., Smithsonian*

Black Monday

Don Cheadle returns as a reckless stock trader who, having triggered the 1987 market crash, is ready to spend Season 2 putting his team back on top. *Sunday, March 15, at 10 p.m., Showtime*

Wood: An android fights for our freedom.

Show of the week

Westworld

Goodbye, Westworld; hello, real world. As Season 3 of this puzzle-box sci-fi series begins, the android played by Evan Rachel Wood has escaped the cowboy theme park where she was created and gained sentience. Now Wood's Dolores is at large in a near-future Los Angeles and about to recruit a construction worker played by Aaron Paul to assist in a revolution. Their target: a data collection firm that is making humans no freer than the androids who populate Westworld. Lena Waithe, Vincent Cassel, and NFL star Marshawn Lynch add three more new faces. *Sunday, March 15, at 9 p.m., HBO*

Acorn TV, HBO

Baked fishcakes: Elegant minimalism by way of Russia

People in Russia eat better than you probably imagine, says Darra Goldstein in *Beyond the North Wind* (Ten Speed Press). Far from bland and heavy, traditional everyday Russian cooking "jibes beautifully with our current dietary trends." Think foraged mushrooms and berries, pickled vegetables, fresh catch from a cold sea, and the tang of sourdough rye. In a land with poor soil and a harsh climate, these have been staple components of a healthily balanced diet, and the old foods "feel new again in their elegant minimalism."

Consider these "lemony, herb-strewn" fishcakes, made with rye flour and cooked using a distinctively Russian method: They're sautéed on the stove, then steamed in the oven, which approximates the effect of finishing them in the moist heat of one of the masonry stoves that still warm many rural Russian kitchens.

They're best served straight from the pan.

Recipe of the week
Baked fishcakes

1 medium onion, chopped
1 lb halibut or cod, cut into small pieces
1 small egg, lightly beaten
1¼ tsp salt
¾ tsp freshly ground black pepper
4 garlic cloves
1 tbsp plus 1 tsp unsalted butter, at room temperature
¾ cup rye flour
2 tbsp vegetable oil
½ cup finely chopped fresh parsley
½ cup finely chopped fresh dill
8 lemon slices
¼ cup finely chopped scallions

Grate onion into the bowl of a food processor. Add fish, egg, 1 tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper. Pulse until ground medium-fine. Transfer mixture to a bowl and chill in refrigerator at least 1 hour. Peel and smash 2 garlic cloves and set aside. Mince remaining 2 garlic cloves; set them aside too. Preheat oven to 400. Cut a round of parchment paper large enough to cover a 12-inch skillet and grease with 1 tsp butter. Mix rye flour with remaining ¼ tsp each of salt and pepper and spread on a large plate.

Remove fish mixture from refrigerator and pour off any liquid. The fish will be very moist, so it will help to moisten your hands with cold water before working with it. Gently shape mixture into 8 round patties, setting each one on the rye flour as soon as it's shaped. Carefully turn patties to coat both sides well.

Heat oil, the remaining 1 tbsp butter, and 2 smashed garlic cloves over medium heat in a 12-inch ovenproof skillet. When butter begins to foam, add fishcakes. Cook 4 minutes, periodically sliding a spatula under cakes to ensure they don't stick. After 4 minutes, turn fishcakes and reduce heat to medium-low. Cook second side an additional 4 minutes.

Remove pan from heat and sprinkle fishcakes with parsley, dill, and minced garlic. Top with lemon slices. Lay parchment, buttered side down, over fishcakes, pressing down lightly. Cover the pan with an ovenproof lid (or tightly sealed aluminum foil). Bake in oven for 8 minutes. Remove lid and parchment and sprinkle fishcakes with chopped scallions. Serves 3 to 4.

Wine: A prickly Tuscan

Rosso di Montalcino can be frustrating, said Eric Asimov in *The New York Times*. At its best, it's an "easy, delicious" Tuscan sangiovese akin to Chianti classico. But because the Montalcino region also produces brunello, a wine aged at least four years, some winemakers use the cheaper rosso as a dumping ground for lesser grapes. The three below are not those.

Uccelliera
Rosso di Montalcino
2016

2016 Uccelliera ($29). The wine that our panel enjoyed most at a recent tasting balances earthiness, bittersweet fruit flavors, and lively acidity. Its structure suggests it will age well.

2017 Ciacci Piccolomini d'Aragona ($25). An even better value, this rosso is "sweet, spicy, and floral," offering "clear, balanced" mineral and bittersweet red fruit flavors.

2017 Mastrojanni ($27). Another fine product of southern Montalcino, the Mastrojanni is "lively, pure, and structured, with earthy flavors of ripe, red fruits."

Houston's best: The three new restaurants you have to try

In our state as much as in any other, "restaurants are becoming more and more like bars," said Patricia Sharpe in *Texas Monthly*. In our new list of Texas' best new restaurants, Houston dominates the top five with three venues, and all three exude at least a little of the casual, party-like air that diners seem to crave these days.

Squable's casual dining room

Squable At Justin Yu and Bobby Heugel's latest hit venture, the easygoing setting and the reasonable prices belie the sophistication of the cooking, and the food, though unpredictable in style, is "deliciously on-target." Rising talents Mark Clayton and Drew Gimma call it a European menu with American influences, which somehow explains why they serve succotash with a chicken-based "sauce espagnole" and why the mussels are marinated, shelled, and served on grilled toast with "sassy" calico beans. *632 W. 19th St., (832) 834-7362*

Davis St. at Hermann Park OK, this place isn't new. But it "came roaring back" last summer after a two-year hiatus, and the excitement it's generating owes much to a new chef: Houston veteran Mark Holley. You'll hear live jazz Wednesdays and cocktails being shaken any night. Holly is a seafood master, as he proves with his blackened grouper and the "miraculously crisp" fried oysters piled atop his duck confit gumbo. *5925 Almeda Rd., (877) 328-4778*

MAD As the name suggests, chef Luis Roger's tribute to molecular gastronomy pioneer Ferran Adrià is a "zany carnival of a restaurant"—the kind of Spanish eatery where the tapas include liquid olives and a trompe l'oeil tomato. "Order one of everything," because Roger is "having the time of his life." *4444 Westheimer Rd., (281) 888-2770*

Stefan Wettainen, John Davidson

This week's dream: Chasing the counterculture on Mexico's Pacific coast

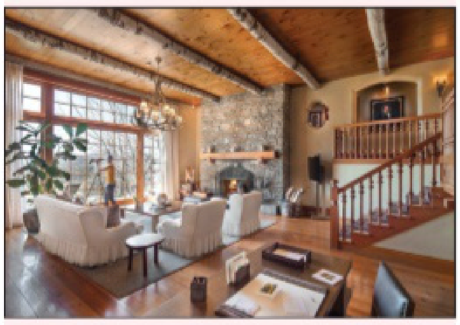
Costa Chica isn't like other Mexican beach regions you might know, said **Freda Moon** in ***The New York Times***. Because there are no direct international flights, "the outsiders who end up on this stretch of Pacific coastline are here for a reason." Many are surfers, drawn to the dangerous waves that also help explain why this region of Oaxaca has remained immune to "Cancún-esque" overdevelopment. Instead, it's home to coastal Mexico's "few remaining pockets of weirdness and eccentricity." During a five-day visit that took me from a world-class artists' retreat to a party town to a boutique hotel created out of a former nudist resort, "I was struck again and again by how different these countercultural enclaves are from each other."

Surfers test the waves at La Punta in January.

Casa Wabi, the artists' retreat, wasn't the showy gallery complex I had expected when I'd read that Pritzker Prize–winning architect Tadao Ando had designed the main building. I snuck into the property while staying nearby in a chicly minimalist one-room Airbnb, and discovered that Casa Wabi is less about its architecture than about an idea about art's place in the world. It was essentially an open-air workshop—a small array of structures tucked near the beach in a maze of tall brambles. Working my way east, I next stopped in Brisas de Zicatela, a rowdy surfer town pulsing with music and an international crowd of beautiful people. The unofficial uniforms seemed to be "ultrashort" jean cutoffs and blond dreadlocks for the women and tattoos and man-buns for the barefoot men. I was happier a few miles away at Playa Puerto Angelito, a swimmable beach where a dozen oysters cost less than $5.50.

Costa Chica ends near two neighboring towns, Mazunte and Zipolite, that offer their own twists on counterculture. Mazunte is home to yogis and healing centers and, oddly, some excellent Italian pizzerias apparently run by teenagers. Zipolite, which is home to a small but vibrant gay community, also harbors one of Mexico's only nude beaches, and I chose to stay nearby at a particularly amusing moment—during a swingers' convention. It's easy to make fun of such scenes, and my hosts at the boutique hotel certainly did. One co-owner dismissed the Mazunte crowd as wannabe hippies. Zipolite, he said, "has the real thing—you can spot them from their gray ponytails." *The Airbnb mentioned above, known as Casa Tiny, rents for $170 a night.*

Hotel of the week



A cottage living room

Adrian Wilson/The New York Times

Twin Farms

Barnard, Vt.

"If you want to stay at the best hotel on the planet, just head to Vermont," said Kristi Palma in *The Boston Globe*. Twin Farms, a bucolic adults-only getaway, was last week named Hotel of the Year by *Forbes Travel Guide*, the outfit that awards star ratings based on incognito visits. The property's record-breaking score owes much to personalized service, including custom-prepared meals. But all starts with the setting. The 10-room main building and 10 cottages, including one for modern art connoisseurs, are scattered across 300 rolling acres once owned by novelist Sinclair Lewis. *twinfarms.com, from $2,000 for a two-night stay*

Getting the flavor of...

Utah's Goblin Valley

Bryce Canyon National Park gets more attention, but Utah's own Goblin Valley State Park is "every bit as impressive and Mars-like," said Kastalia Medrano in *Thrillist.com*. Known for its thousands of goblins, or hoodoos—"those bizarre-looking rock spires that we've come to associate with Bryce Canyon"—Goblin Valley can hold its own with any national park. Those hoodoos, which are created when a rock column erodes more quickly than its cap, seem to stretch to the horizon in every direction, and you're free to wander among them. The park, four hours south of Salt Lake City, is open year-round, but it's best to visit this desert in cooler months. Skilled canyoners can get backcountry permits for $2 to rappel into the Goblin's Lair, a natural sandstone cave, and hikers and mountain bikers can both enjoy established trails. Stick around in the evening for top-notch stargazing: Goblin Valley is certified as an International Dark Sky Park.

Quality time with the Golden Gate

Even "the quintessential 21st-century city" has pockets of windswept natural splendor, said **Helen Carefoot** in ***The Washington Post***. During a recent trip back home, I joined my mother and brother for a hike in San Francisco's Lands End, a park within the Golden Gate National Recreation Area that provides "many of the Bay Area's most jaw-dropping vistas." Our trail followed the path of a defunct rail line and took us past Point Lobos (a favorite spot for sea lions) and through "a dark green canopy of cypress and eucalyptus." The Golden Gate Bridge isn't exactly close, but glimpses of it are constant, and Eagle's Point and the beaches offer unobstructed views. We stopped at the stone labyrinth that an artist built on one open bluff, and at Cliff House, an aptly named restaurant whose marvelous observation deck is open to noncustomers. "The three of us looked out on the blue expanse, and I felt my last bits of stress wash away with the tide."

Last-minute travel deals

Spring skiing at Whistler
Ski Whistler, the British Columbia resort that hosted 2010's Winter Olympics, and enjoy slope-side luxury at the Fairmont Chateau. The hotel is offering free lift passes and 15 percent off all rooms. Rates now start at $378 a night. *fairmont.com/whistler*

Ireland by van
Vagabond, a tour operator for travelers in Ireland, is offering 10 percent off journeys departing in March and April. Choose between laid-back "Driftwood" tours and tours that mix sightseeing with hiking, kayaking, surfing, and similar activities. *vagabondtoursofireland.com*

Easy Carmel-by-the-Sea
The Coachman's Inn in picturesque Carmel-by-the-Sea, Calif., is offering a 30 percent discount on weeknight stays through May 14. Doubles with fireplaces now start at $188 at the centrally located property, run by a small boutique chain. *coachmansinn.com*

Consumer

The 2020 Hyundai Venue: What the critics say

A new entry benchmark, from $17,350

The Detroit News

Cars like the new Hyundai Venue are "increasingly rare." At a time when the average price of a new vehicle sold in the U.S. is $39,000, Hyundai has just rolled out a "tasty" little subcompact crossover that's priced well below the $20,000 mark. "As Mini Cooper–cute as it is utilitarian," the Venue is now the lowest-priced SUV in America, yet it's "peppered" with modern electronics and—especially if you opt for the manual transmission—perfectly willing to play.

Consumer Reports

Not that the Venue is fast: Its 121-hp four-cylinder engine struggles to reach highway speed when merging. But this attractive front-wheel-drive runabout is "poised in around-town driving" and feels "pretty sprightly" on country roads. What's more, it averages 35 mpg with its standard transmission, it's surprisingly roomy for its size, and it "has more style than expected." In the $22,050 Denim Edition, the cabin "looks like a classic pair of Levi's."

Motor1.com

The Venue has no flaw you won't find in every entry-level rival, so it "pretty handily" emerges as the best in its class. Even the entry price buys lane-keep assist, front-collision warning, an 8-inch touch screen, and Apple CarPlay and Android Auto. This is a good car at any price. For the price Hyundai is asking, "it's a great car."

The best of...drinks to go

Stojo 12 oz Cup

This reusable silicone cup—available in a rainbow of colors—flattens to a 2.5-inch disk that'll fit in a pocket. "It's truly that small." And it will pay for itself if you buy your coffee at a café that offers a bring-your-own-mug discount.

$15, stojo.co

Source: TravelAndLeisure.com

PopBabies Personal Blender

"The true definition of portable," this single-serving blender can be charged with a USB cord from your desktop computer and will also operate unplugged. Just be ready to cut fruit small, and your smoothies will always be fresh.

$37, amazon.com

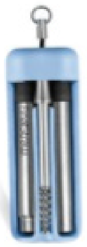
Source: Shape.com

Stanley Stay Hot French Press

When traveling, "think like a construction worker to always have great coffee." Pack this Stanley thermos in your bag with your choice of dry grounds. Hot water can always be accessed—even from a flight attendant.

$65, stanley-pmi.com

Source: Bloomberg.com



Final Straw 2.0

Forget the knockoffs. This popular collapsible steel straw (shown here in its carrying case) is "designed to last a lifetime." The tips are made of food-grade silicone, and the case, which doubles as a keychain, also holds a telescoping cleaning brush.

$25, final.com

Source: People.com

CamelBak Ratchet Hydration Pack

Built for cyclists, this is the perfect hydration pack to wear at a music festival, when you want to be "pared down to the essentials." It holds almost 3 liters of water and has a separate storage area for keys and other miscellany.

$85, camelbak.com

Source: MensHealth.com

Tip of the week...

How to be a self-checkout master

■ **Know your limits.** Choose the self-checkout line at your supermarket or discount store only when you have 15 items or less. Beyond that number, it ceases to be the most efficient option, and because the counter space is limited, you'll struggle with bagging.

■ **Anticipate complications.** If you're using coupons or loyalty cards, consider asking an attendant if the sequencing will matter. And know that tobacco or other age-restricted items can create delays.

■ **Slow down.** When you start scanning purchases, don't try to be faster than the computer system. Because it needs a moment to recognize each item and calculate the price and discounts, a more deliberate pace can actually speed your checkout.

■ **Respect the weight sensor.** Don't let a purse, coattail, or child touch the bagging area, because the system will think you've put something there without paying for it.

Source: The Washington Post

And for those who have everything...

"Don't settle for a garage like everyone else's." Every **Supercar Capsule Garage** built by ASZarchetetti Group, an Italian architecture firm, treats your prized vehicle or vehicles as the works of art they are. The designers create custom showrooms that can be stacked in a tower or integrated with your home as a glowing space that flatters the car and puts it behind a wall of glass. "What better way to wake up in the morning than with the smell of fresh coffee and the sight of your McLaren, Ferrari, or Lamborghini?"

From $50,000, supercarcapsule.com

Source: AutoEvolution.com

Best apps...

For taking measurements

■ **Dimensions:** Rough measurements of rooms and objects can be taken using Google Play or Apple's free augmented-reality apps, both called Measure. Android's comparable app is Moasure, while Ruler for Android or iOS makes the screen a ruler.

■ **Distances:** Strava excels at measuring distances you've walked and plotting your path on a map. When driving, try MileIQ, and turn to Polarsteps if you're trying to track distance traveled by land, sea, and air.

■ **Altitude:** Your phone is equipped to calculate altitude, but you need an app to show you the results. For iOS, try My Altitude or My Altitude and Elevation GPS; for Android GPS, try My Elevation or Altimeter Ler.

■ **Speed:** You can always use Google Maps to see your current speed. For more functionality, try Cyclemeter for cycling and SpeedView or Speedometer Speed Box for everything else.

Source: Gizmodo.com

THE WEEK

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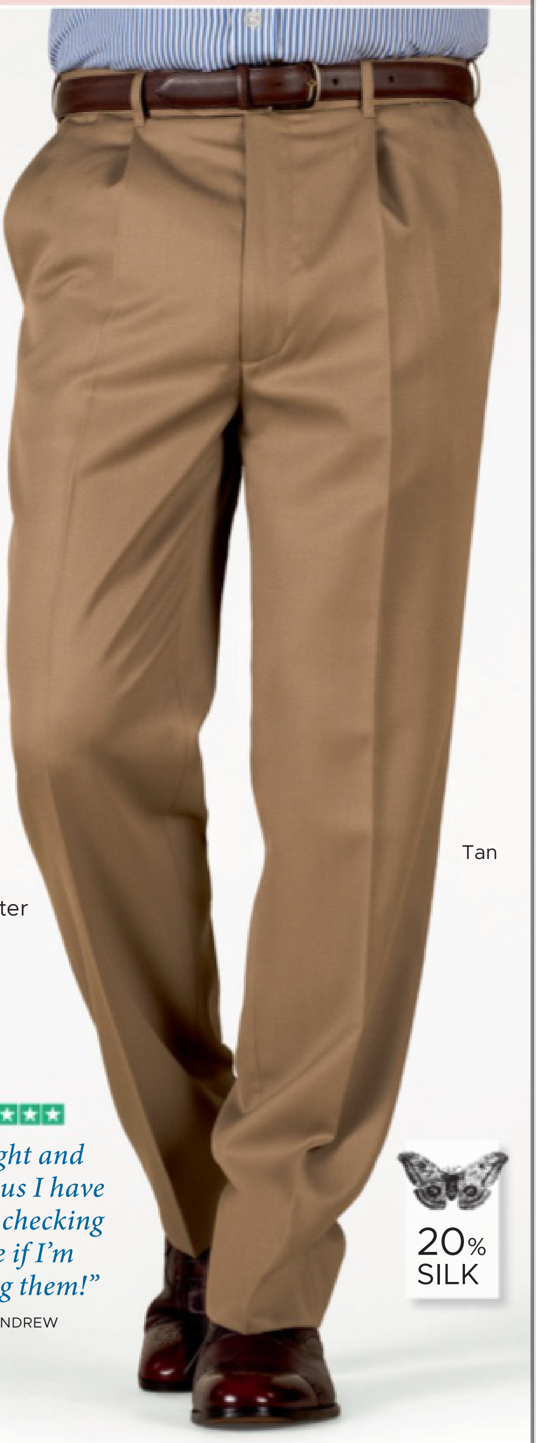

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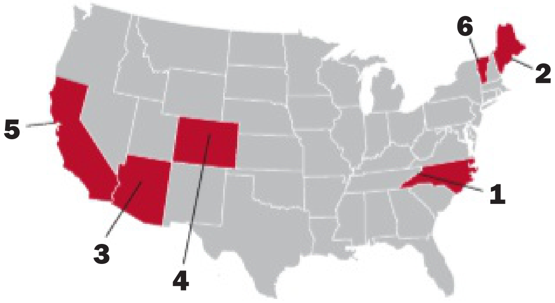
Trustpilot ★★★★★ RATED EXCELLENT

This week: Homes near hiking trails

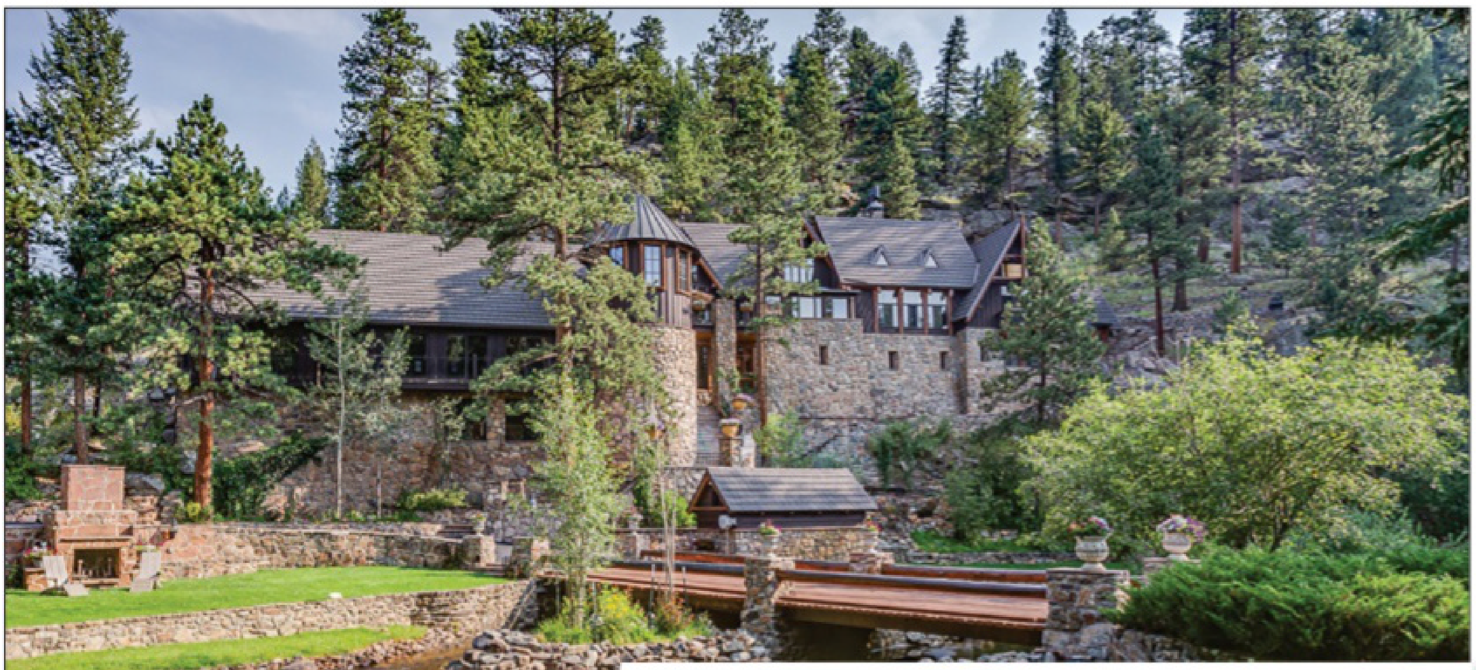
1 ◀ Burnsville, N.C. Perched on 2 acres on a bank of the South Toe River, this three-bedroom home is also close to six hiking trails and Mount Mitchell. The 1992 house is anchored by a great room with a 24-foot vaulted ceiling, a central fireplace, and floor-to-ceiling windows. Outside are a covered porch with a fireplace; a two-bedroom guesthouse with a balcony; garden space; river frontage; and golf course access. $850,000. Debora Roldan, June Jerome Realty, (828) 208-0112

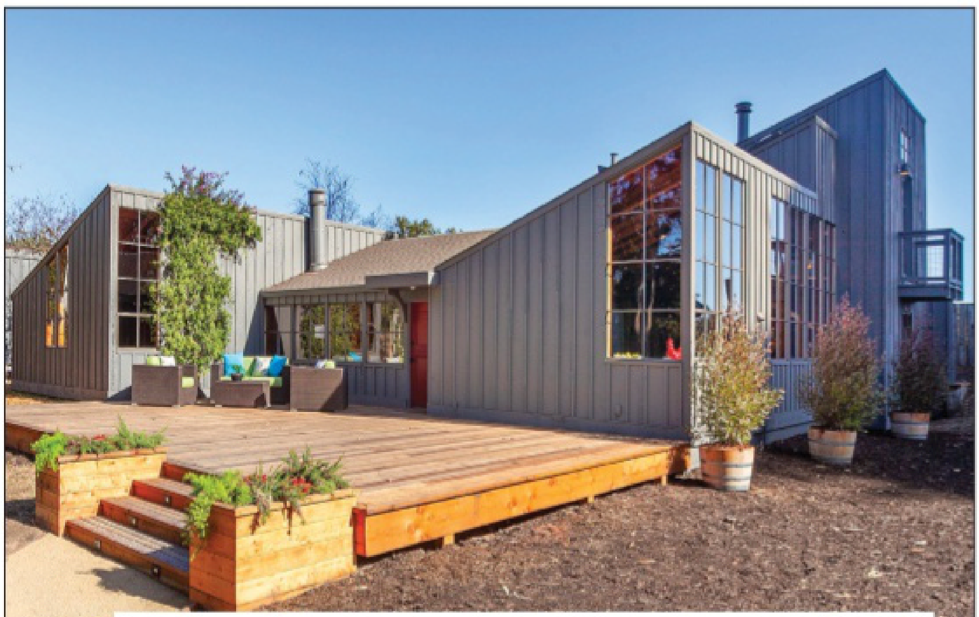


2 ▶ Rockport, Maine Rockledge, built in 2015, is a five-bedroom New England–style farmhouse overlooking Penobscot Bay and close to multiple trailheads and a state park. The contemporary, light-filled interior has a great room with a balcony, a chef's kitchen, and a master bedroom with a wall of windows. The 1-acre property includes a one-bedroom guesthouse, mature trees and traditional plantings, and open lawns leading to the water. $4,500,000. Scott Horty, Camden Real Estate, (207) 596-1110

3 ▶ Sedona, Ariz. Set on a hill bordering U.S. Forest Service land, this five-bedroom ranch has views of Cathedral Rock, Thunder Mountain, and more, as well as quick access to Sedona's 100-plus trails. The 2007 house features exposed beams, a modern kitchen, a master suite with spa bathroom, and a covered deck. The 1.7-acre landscaped lot has an expansive patio, a pool, and a waterfall. $2,500,000. Genevie Evirgen, RE/MAX Sedona, (928) 300-1778

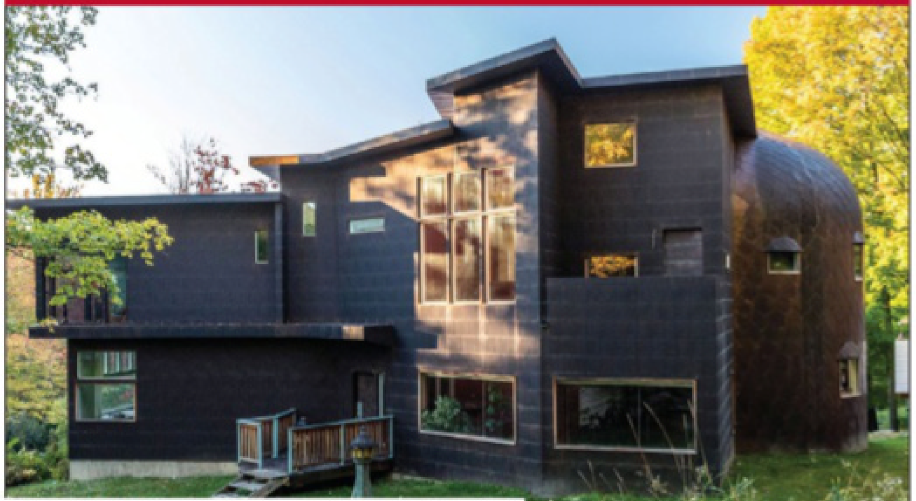
4 ▶ Evergreen, Colo. Bear Creek Castle, built in 1927, is near 1,100 acres of open-space hiking, three parks with high mountain-peak trails, and Evergreen Lake. The four-bedroom historic home includes radiant heat, an elevator, a master suite, nanny quarters, and an indoor pool and bar area. The 2.2-acre property is equipped with a generator and features stands of aspen and pine trees and 220 feet of creek frontage. $3,900,000. Joy Opp, West and Main Homes, (303) 868-8769

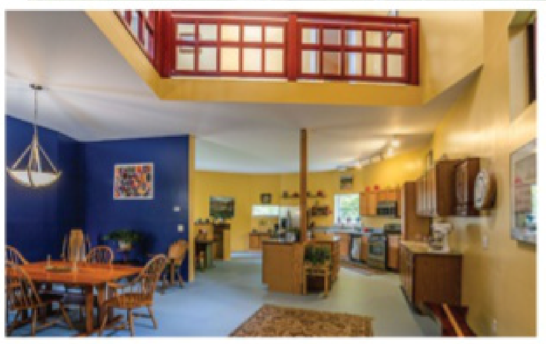




5 ▲ Bolinas, Calif. This Marin County estate sits amid thousands of acres of state park along the Point Reyes National Seashore. The midcentury-inspired three-bedroom main house was built in 1969 entirely of redwood, using board-and-batten construction, and has decks, fireplaces, and a great room with outsize windows opening to the courtyard. The 2.8-acre wooded lot includes a two-bedroom bunkhouse, a one-bedroom guesthouse, and a meadow with trails to the beach. $3,625,000. B.G. Bates, Golden Gate/Sotheby's International Realty, (415) 706-1026

Steal of the week





6 ▲ Westford, Vt. This copper-sided three-bedroom home comes with 79 acres of tapped maple forest, close to the Schultz Trail and Brewster River Gorge. The house features an open floor plan, organic-shaped rooms, a gourmet kitchen with island and breakfast nook, a solarium, and a game room. Outside are a heated barn with workshop, a pond, and ornamental stone walls. $534,900. Rebecca Lemire, Hickok & Boardman/Coldwell Banker, (802) 846-9595

BUSINESS

The news at a glance

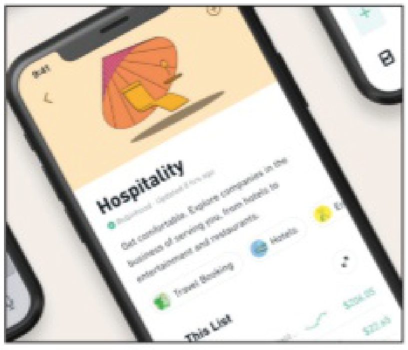
The bottom line

- Female-founded companies got just 2.7 percent of all venture capital funding in 2019, for a total of $3.54 billion. That's up from 2.2 percent in 2018, but remains less than WeWork alone received in funding ($5 billion) in the same period.
Fortune.com
- Shares of Zoom Technologies (ZOOM) went up 96.4 percent last week even though the company hasn't reported revenue since 2011. Investors confused the stock ticker symbol with Zoom Video (ZM), the conferencing service favored by many remote workers. ZOOM went up 52 percent last year on the day of ZM's IPO.
MarketWatch.com
- Employees at Goldman Sachs left behind precisely 525 suits and 256 donatable items of women's clothing at their old U.K. headquarters when they moved into a new office last summer.
Financial News (U.K.)

- Americans paid almost $64 billion less in federal income taxes during the first year under the Republican tax overhaul signed into law in 2017. The biggest tax cuts came for households earning $40,000 to $50,000 a year (14.5 percent decrease) and those making between $250,000 and $500,000 (14.4 percent decrease).
MarketWatch.com
- Federal regulators are fining the four largest wireless carriers a total of $208 million for selling the location data of customers to third-party aggregators, leading to several privacy breaches. The largest fine, $91 million, went to T-Mobile for sharing data with more than 80 entities.
The New York Times

Investing: Robinhood kidnaps customer cash

Not everyone caught the stock market's record rally this week, said **Jeff John Roberts** in *Fortune.com*. Just before the Dow climbed nearly 1,300 points in one day, the popular brokerage app Robinhood experienced a "systemwide outage" hindering access to "all of Robinhood's apps and trading and banking services." The system remained down for most of the next two days, a disruption "unheard of in the brokerage industry, where outages that last minutes are enough to cause a hubbub." Some of Robinhood's 10 million customers pledged to take their business elsewhere; others said on Twitter they would seek legal advice. Robinhood blamed the crash on "a surge in volume spurred by investors spooked" by the market's gyrations.



An app that snapped.

Ouch, said **Felix Salmon** in *Axios.com*. Just last summer, Robinhood was valued at $7.6 billion "on the thesis that bringing Silicon Valley's disruptive norms to Wall Street" would endear it to Millennials. But recent stumbles are a reminder that "old-fashioned trustworthiness has its merits." In the fall, users discovered a glitch in the system that gave them "infinite leverage" on trades; then Robinhood was fined $1.25 million for failing to ensure that users received the best possible prices. "The outage this week is Robinhood's worst blunder yet." With other brokers now offering no-fee stock trades, "it's hard to see" why customers would stick with it now.

Apple: Compensation for phone slowdowns

Apple will pay certain iPhone users $25 per phone to settle litigation accusing it of intentionally slowing down older phones, said Jonathan Stempel in *Reuters.com*. For years, customers had "contended that their phones' performance suffered after they installed Apple software updates," particularly after the release of newer iPhone versions. In 2017, the company admitted to the slowdowns, which analysts call "throttling," though Apple denied that it intentionally "misled customers into believing their phones were near the end of their life cycle." Under the proposed settlement, Apple could pay up to $500 million.

Waymo: Alphabet gets funding for 'other bets'

Alphabet-backed self-driving car startup Waymo raised $2.25 billion from outside investors this week, said Jennifer Elias in *CNBC.com*. The extraordinary sum, from investors including Silver Lake, Andreessen Horowitz, and AutoNation, is the latest sign that "some of Alphabet's 'Other Bets' companies need much more capital than Alphabet is willing to provide." Last fall, analysts at Morgan Stanley cut their estimates of Waymo's valuation by 40 percent, because "self-driving car companies have found wider adoption to be more difficult than expected."

Shareholders: Twitter CEO under fire

High-profile activist investor Paul Singer is pushing to remove Jack Dorsey as CEO of Twitter, said Peter Kafka in *Vox.com*. Singer's firm, Elliott Management, has acquired "about $1 billion worth of Twitter shares" and wants to replace four board members with its own nominees, "who would then push Dorsey to leave." Even as Twitter has turned into an international cultural force, Dorsey's tenure has produced lackluster earnings and a disappointing stock price. Dorsey also runs a second company, Square, leading Singer to argue this week that "Twitter would be worth more if it had a full-time CEO."

Trade: U.S., U.K. turn to negotiations

The British government released its negotiating objectives for a trade deal with the U.S. this week, said Mark Landler and Ana Swanson in *The New York Times*, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson expressing hope the countries can eventually swap "Scottish smoked salmon for Stetson hats." President Trump has said a U.S.-U.K. deal would be "magnificent," but talks may be hampered by Trump's anger over the U.K. agreeing to include the Chinese telecom maker Huawei in Britain's 5G rollout. Officials on both sides have insisted that the dispute over Huawei would not "poison" the trade talks.

A Costco beef over hot dog deals

Only Costco members will now be allowed to enjoy their "inflation-proof hot dog–and-soda combo," said Garrett Snyder in the *Los Angeles Times*. Starting later this month, the wholesale club "will require an active membership (currently $60) to order" at its popular food courts. Those have "long been a destination for bargain lovers," where the $1.50 price of a hotdog and soda combo hasn't changed in 35 years. And since many of the food courts were located outside the store, people came for the deals whether they had a Costco card or not. News of the change in policy didn't sit well with some customers, who viewed the move as "classist." Others applauded barring "random nonmembers in our Costcos!" A Costco customer service rep told Fox Business that Costco had always had this membership policy, but would now enforce it more strictly.

Alamy

Covid-19: The price of precaution

Hawaii advised residents to stock up for 14 days.

Reuters

Coronavirus has already hit many Americans in their wallets, said **Jaewon Kang** in *The Wall Street Journal*. Shoppers are stocking up on what they can to prepare for the possibility of a quarantine, and initial tallies aren't cheap. A couple from Denver spent $250 at Target last week "on canned soup, pasta, granola bars, and other dry foods," as well as over-the-counter cold medicine and dog food. "Grocers are working to prevent shortages," but masks and hand sanitizer are in short supply—leading to scams and rip-offs. Last week, Amazon purged tens of thousands of items off its e-commerce platform because of price gouging, said **Jon Porter** in *TheVerge.com*. Some purveyors of masks and respirators were "tripling or even quadrupling the price," with one (since removed) 10-pack of face masks, usually priced under $20, selling for $128.

The rush on necessities extends to medicines too, said **David Lazarus** in the *Los Angeles Times*. "About 90 percent of the core components of leading antibiotics such as amoxicillin and penicillin come from China," and the FDA said last week that "the coronavirus has resulted in at least one drug shortage because an active ingredient was unavailable." The agency hasn't identified the drug, but to be safe, "I've ordered additional supplies of my own meds." Another precaution you might be thinking about is canceling flights to affected regions, said **Aimee Pichi** in *CBSNews.com*. Unfortunately, that could cost you—even if you bought travel insurance. "A key phrase for travelers to understand: 'unexpected event'—that's what insurance companies are offering to cover when you buy a standard travel policy." But the global outbreak is being excluded from coverage "because it's no longer unexpected." There are also "cancel for any reason" policies that allow travelers to recoup costs, but they usually refund only 75 percent of your fare, are priced about 40 percent higher than standard travel policies, and come with other restrictions.

Time off work is potentially the biggest cost of the virus, said **Amanda Mull** in *The Atlantic*, especially for the one-third of Americans in jobs with no sick leave. "More than 80 percent of cases are mild." Inevitably, that means that many people infected with the virus will show up sick and infect others. Gig workers are particularly vulnerable, said **Nitasha Tiku** in *The Washington Post*. They have "potentially higher risk of coming into contact with infected people" they might encounter while dropping off food or picking up fares from the airport. Yet drivers for companies such as Uber and Lyft are independent contractors, and many have no health insurance. Worried drivers are now "scrubbing down their cars inch by inch," hoping to reduce their risk.

What the experts say

'Pandemic bonds' fail to provide aid

Despite a worldwide total of more than 3,000 deaths from coronavirus, bonds designed to provide aid in case of pandemic are yet to be triggered, said Mark Baker in *Euromoney*. So-called pandemic bonds were created by the World Bank after "a slow and ineffective reaction to a bad outbreak of Ebola in 2014." The bonds are held by investors who bet that their high interest payments outweigh the chances of paying out in case of a global epidemic. If a severe epidemic strikes, investors' money is taken to aid the medical response in developing countries, based on a complex formula; for instance, some of the bonds will lose 75 percent of their value "in the event of a global outbreak" with more than 750 deaths. However, the elaborate rules mean that no country is yet eligible for help. The bonds have paid out three times before, all in cases of Ebola.

A lousy deal, delivered via app

Your favorite delivery app might be seriously costing you, said Brian Chen in *The New York Times*. I tested DoorDash, Postmates, GrubHub, and Uber Eats, using "all four apps to make identical orders from four restaurants," to check the markups. An order of two turkey sandwiches from a nearby Subway would have cost $13.21 (tax included) at the restaurant. But on Uber Eats, the total was $25.25—a 91 percent markup, including a $3 "miscellaneous" fee. And that's not including the tip. It's not just extra fees that are costly; menu prices on the apps can also be inflated to cover delivery. A family meal at Panda Express cost $39 on site, but "the price was listed at $44.85 on Postmates and $47.10 on Uber Eats, DoorDash, and GrubHub." Uber's service charges were the highest, and least predictable.

The secondhand bag bubble

Prices for Hermès handbags are skyrocketing, said Carol Ryan in *The Wall Street Journal*, and that's become a problem for the French luxury house. With production of two models, the Birkin and Kelly, kept at just 120,000 per year, boutiques are left "empty-handed more often than not," and e-commerce is filling the void. Hermès, along with watchmakers Rolex and Patek Philippe, "is one of the few brands whose goods are more expensive to buy used than new." That means "a customer who pays $12,000 for a basic Birkin 35 cm calfskin in a boutique today could immediately sell it to a dealer for around $14,000." Dealers then turn to Instagram to sell the same bag for $18,000 to $22,000.

Charity of the week

In 1988, three conservationists came up with a bold vision to save rain forests and endangered species by purchasing land and converting it into private nature reserves. Thus, the **Rainforest Trust (rainforesttrust.org)** was birthed. The charity partners with organizations in Africa, South America, and Southeast Asia to identify sites that are under threat by loggers, miners, or ranchers and raises funds to acquire the land to stop the trend of deforestation, with an estimated total forest area the size of Switzerland getting destroyed annually. The trust then trains locals to safeguard the reserves by removing traps and stopping illegal logging. Since its inception, the Rainforest Trust has protected over 23 million acres of rain forests worldwide and is working on securing 50 million acres more.

Each charity we feature has earned a four-star overall rating from Charity Navigator, which rates not-for-profit organizations on the strength of their finances, their governance practices, and the transparency of their operations. Four stars is the group's highest rating.

World economy: Epidemic threatens global growth

Emergency Fed action failed to halt the slide.

The Covid-19 epidemic has walloped the stock market to a degree not felt by investors since the financial crisis, said **Fred Imbert** and **Eustance Huang** in *CNBC.com*. The Dow dropped more than 3,500 points last week, or 12 percent, while the S&P 500 fell 11.5 percent in the market's worst five-day skid since 2008. Stocks staged a rally on Monday but then swooned again as more companies, including Microsoft, "issued earnings and revenue warnings." This week, the Federal Reserve took the extraordinary step of making an emergency cut in its benchmark interest rates, but the move failed to stop the market's slide. The fast-moving virus poses a crucial test for the 11-year bull market, which "has survived an unprecedented trade war, a catastrophic tsunami in Japan, and a severe crash in oil prices," said **Matt Egan** in *CNN.com*. Consumer spending has kept the U.S. economy afloat during the trade war with China, which weakened the global economy. With Americans preparing to hunker down, Moody's chief economist estimated the odds of a recession in the first half of 2020 at 40 percent.

"Economists say a pandemic could clearly cause a recession in the United States," said **Ben Casselman** in *The New York Times*, but we're not there yet. The damage from the epidemic has mainly hit factories and supply chains, causing a short-term drop in production and sales. Consumer buying can snap back from those kinds of shocks—just as natural disasters tend to be followed by a burst of rebuilding. "So far, the coronavirus outbreak looks more like a hurricane than like a financial crisis—but that could change quickly." This feels like a panic, said **Marcus Ashworth** in *Bloomberg.com*. The stock market's bull run has also been "long overdue" for a correction "that has been delivered all at once." Markets will eventually rationalize the severity of the outbreak "and accept that the world can get back to business."

It's not that simple, said **Thomas Gryta** and **Russell Adams** in *The Wall Street Journal*. The coronavirus is a different menace—a two-headed monster that's "rapidly hitting supply and demand." The outbreaks in Asia and Europe have stalled factories "that churn out everything from smartphones to pharmaceuticals." And on the consumer side, air travel and tourism won't just snap back; many plans have simply been canceled. This was supposed to be the year of a global rebound, after a stagnant 2019 for most of the world's economies, said **Eswar Prasad** in *The New York Times*. Now those rosy forecasts are obsolete. "Coronavirus has put the world economy in survival mode."

A "coordinated effort" from the Federal Reserve and other central banks could help the world economy pull through, said **Jesse Pound** in *CNBC.com*. Goldman Sachs' chief economist says he expects that the damage from the coronavirus "stops just short of a global recession." But investors need to be realistic about what the Fed can do, said **Josh Barro** in *NYMag.com*. Low rates aren't going to counteract the factory closures, nor are they going to "induce people to go to the mall." Rather, "the most important role the central banks play will be after the epidemic passes," digging the world out from under the economic fallout.

Computers make harsh bosses

Josh Dzieza
TheVerge.com

The robots have arrived, said Josh Dzieza, except they're working in management. In many fields, jobs haven't disappeared, but automation is flourishing "in the form of the supervisor, the foreman, the middle manager." And these bosses aren't kind. For the humans under them, "jobs are becoming more intense, stressful, and dangerous." Few companies have embraced automated management as completely as Amazon, where "every aspect of management at the company's warehouses is directed by software, from when people work to how fast they work to when they get fired for falling behind." Workers there say that "little breaks and minor freedoms get optimized out" of their jobs, leaving them no chance to "rest or recover." The pace is enforced with the help of only two or three human managers for 300 workers. In call centers, meanwhile, software listens in on calls to track appropriate signs of empathy. And it's not just customer service centers and warehouses. One software engineer working from home was required to download a program that tracked his keystrokes and even accessed his webcam to "take pictures every 10 minutes to ensure he was at his desk." If the program said he wasn't working hard enough, he wouldn't get paid, so "even using the bathroom in his own home required speed and strategy."

The man who ruined U.S. business

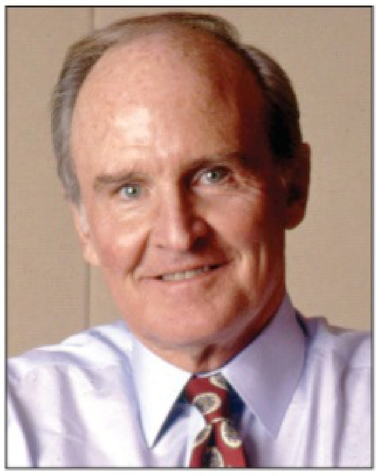
Joe Nocera
Bloomberg.com

I know it's uncouth to speak ill of the dead, but Jack Welch's "effect on American capitalism was too destructive to go unmentioned," said Joe Nocera. Welch, who died this week at age 84, was lionized as a business icon while running General Electric from 1981 to 2001 for building the world's most valuable company. But Welch's focus was entirely on the stock price. "Everything else became secondary." In his 20-year tenure, GE's total return was about 5,200 percent, more than double that of the S&P 500 index. Because of that success, "the path Welch trod became the path every other CEO trod as well." They, too, began obsessing over shareholders, putting "employees, vendors, and even customers behind." Take that to its logical extreme and you get Facebook—or Enron, for that matter. Thanks to accounting tricks, Welch had an "uncanny knack" for beating Wall Street's projections by a penny every quarter. That search for quick profits left GE's financial arm holding risky loans that eventually turned toxic—long after Welch was gone. So "when you see pharmaceutical companies raising the price of drugs to unconscionable levels; when companies cut back on research and development to satisfy Wall Street; when CEOs routinely make $40 million to $50 million a year, you now know whom to blame."

Getty

The GE boss who popularized ruthless management

Jack Welch
1935–2020



As the hard-charging CEO and chairman of General Electric from 1981 to 2001, Jack Welch rewrote the playbook on corporate management. Under his famous “rank and yank” policy, GE managers were forced to identify the top 10 percent and bottom 10 percent of their employees every year. Top performers got hefty bonuses, while the bottom 10 percent got pink slips—no matter how well the company was doing. Welch eliminated some 100,000 jobs in his first five years, earning the nickname “Neutron Jack”—a nod to the neutron bomb that was designed to kill people but leave buildings intact. Similarly, he spun off old divisions with no remorse and raced into promising sectors with bold acquisitions. The results of this ruthless approach to business were undeniable: During his 20 years at GE, annual revenue increased from $25 billion to $130 billion, shareholder returns went up by 5,000 percent, and the conglomerate became the world’s biggest company in market value, at more than $500 billion. “Rigorous differentiation delivers real stars,” Welch wrote, “and stars build great businesses.”

John Welch Jr. was born into an Irish-American family in Peabody, Mass., the son of a railroad conductor father and a homemaker mother, said *The Times* (U.K.). Young Jack “lived to win at games and sports”: After losing an ice hockey game he hurled his stick across the rink in disgust. His mother—whom he called “the most influential person in my life”—burst into the locker room and shouted, “You punk! If you don’t know how to lose, you’ll never know how to win!” Welch, who overcame a stutter, was the first member of his family to graduate high school and went on to earn a Ph.D. in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois. After joining GE in 1960, he rocketed up the ranks, becoming vice president of the plastics division in 1968, vice chairman in 1979, and, at age 45, GE’s youngest ever CEO in 1981. Many of Welch’s colleagues regarded him “as a dangerous maverick,” but “untroubled by self-doubt,” he simply didn’t care.

“Welch ran GE as if he were a general” seeking “world domination,” said *The Washington Post*. Spotting Japan’s emerging manufacturing strength, he pushed the conglomerate out of the business of making TVs, toaster ovens, and hair dryers and “moved headlong into commercial banking, high-tech medical devices, and television through the takeover of the NBC television network.” As he transformed the company, “he molded GE’s culture to reflect his demanding personality, one larger than his 5-foot-7 frame,” said the *Los Angeles Times*. He worked six days a week, taking only Sundays off to golf, and enjoyed showing up at GE plants in search of bureaucracy to shred. Welch retired as an icon in 2001, with dozens of disciples atop other companies, and received a record severance payment: $417 million.

But “second thoughts” about his legacy quickly emerged, said *The New York Times*. In 2002, GE was forced to pay $1.5 billion to dredge portions of the Hudson River in upstate New York where the firm had dumped chemicals for years. GE Capital, a money spinner during Welch’s tenure, nearly destroyed the company during the 2008 financial crisis. “GE’s stock price now trades roughly 80 percent below the high it hit in 2000,” and last year the firm reported a loss of $5.4 billion. Welch saw little wrong with his strategy, though. “Business is a lot like a world-class restaurant,” he once wrote. “When you peek behind the kitchen doors, the food never looks as good as when it comes to your table on fine china.”

The scuba-diving writer who launched a paperback empire

Clive Cussler
1931–2020

Clive Cussler chased thrills in life and in writing. The multimillion-selling author hooked readers around the world with tales of his idealized alter ego, Dirk Pitt, head of the fictional National Underwater and Marine Agency (NUMA). The square-jawed Pitt is forever saving the world—and beautiful women—from the schemes of evildoers, typically by retrieving lost artifacts from shipwrecks. The books earned Cussler an estimated $80 million, which he used to start a real-life NUMA and locate some 60 shipwrecks, including a lost Confederate ironclad and a steamship belonging to Cornelius Vanderbilt. Cussler never found critical success; reviewers deemed his work both underwritten and overstuffed with fantastical plot twists. *Sahara* (1992) managed to combine a treasure hunt on the Nile, a mysterious epidemic that begets cannibalism, an environmental catastrophe that threatens to snuff out all sea life, and a Civil War subplot involving Abraham Lincoln’s kidnapping. Yet Cussler knew exactly what his fans wanted. “What I give my readers is straightforward adventure,” he said. “I’m not a literary novelist. I’m an entertainer. That’s good enough for me.”

Growing up in Alhambra, Calif., Cussler was “a poor student but an avid reader of adventure stories,” said *The New York Times*. He joined the Air Force at the outset of the Korean War, becoming a mechanic, and while stationed in Hawaii learned how to scuba dive and explore underwater wrecks. After returning to civilian life in Southern California, Cussler did a stint pumping gas before finding work as an advertising copywriter. Among the slogans he helped coin: “It’s stronger than dirt” for Ajax laundry detergent.

In the late ’60s, Cussler quit his well-paid job and began moonlighting at a skin-diving equipment shop to “gather material for his novels,” said the Associated Press. He soon finished a pair of books featuring Dirk Pitt, who shared Cussler’s height (6-foot-3), “opaline green eyes,” and fondness for Scotch and vintage cars. When his manuscripts were repeatedly rejected, Cussler resorted to trickery, said *The Daily Telegraph* (U.K.). Using stationery bearing the logo of a fictitious literary agency, Cussler posed as an industry veteran about to retire and “warmly recommended himself to other agents.” The gambit secured him his longtime agent, but the first two Pitt novels flopped. His third book, *Raise the Titanic!* (1976), became “a huge best-seller, despite caustic reviews, and made his name.”

Pitt appeared in 22 more books, said *The Guardian* (U.K.), and Cussler would write dozens of other works featuring derring-do protagonists, as well as children’s stories and nonfiction books detailing his own underwater discoveries. In the early 2000s, he began writing with several collaborators, including his son Dirk, which allowed him to maintain a prodigious output; he published four novels in 2017 alone. Cussler wrote up until the end and has a new book out this month. “Hell no, I’m not quitting,” he said in 2015. “They may find me behind the computer, just bones and cobwebs.”

Getty (2)

Scenes from a pandemic

Reports on the advance of Covid-19, in the U.S., Italy, and South Korea

Americans returning from the Diamond Princess *were flown to quarantine in Omaha.*

QUARANTINE IN OMAHA

I caught the coronavirus on the Diamond Princess *cruise ship, said Carl Goldman in* The Washington Post. *Now the fever's subsided and I'm waiting out the illness.*

I HAVE THE coronavirus. And it hasn't been that bad. I am in my late 60s, and the sickest I've ever been was when I had bronchitis several years ago. That laid me out on my back for a few days. This has been much easier: no chills, no body aches. I breathe easily, and I don't have a stuffy nose. My chest feels tight, and I have coughing spells. If I were at home with similar symptoms, I probably would have gone to work as usual.

I caught the virus on the *Diamond Princess*, the cruise ship that was quarantined outside Yokohama, Japan, for 14 days, at the end of a 16-day cruise I took with my wife, Jeri. When I left the ship a couple of weeks ago, I felt fine. We checked our temperatures throughout our quarantine. Jeri and I got a swab test for the virus. Our temperatures were normal; they'd get the swab results back in 48 hours. Our test results had not arrived before we boarded buses for the airport, where two U.S. government planes waited for us. On the bus, I dozed off.

When I woke up, I had a fever. I made my way to the back of the cargo plane, where the Air Force had set up a quarantine area cordoned off with sheets of plastic. They took my temperature. It was over 103 degrees. So I took a seat in the quarantine area and fell back asleep until we touched down in California, at Travis Air Force Base.

Officials from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention came onto the plane and said that three of us who had been cordoned off would fly to Omaha (with our spouses, if they wanted to come along). The CDC had a quarantine location at the University of Nebraska's hospital. We arrived on Feb. 17, greeted by a fleet of ambulances and police cars. Officials put me on a stretcher and wheeled me into a van, which made for a very dramatic scene. I easily could have walked myself, despite my exhaustion.

On the hospital campus, they put me in a biocontainment unit. The space was sealed off, with two double-paned windows that looked out on the hallway, and a large, heavy, insulated door. Two cameras watched me at all times; a set of computer monitors was equipped with microphones, so that the medical staff and I could communicate with CDC officials at central command down the hall. The room had last been used for the Ebola outbreak in 2014.

A doctor and nurses reviewed my case with me and took a bunch of lab tests. They wore heavy-duty hazmat suits sealed with duct tape and equipped with motors that helped with air circulation. It looked like something out of *The Andromeda Strain*. When the test came back a few hours later, I wasn't surprised to learn that I had the coronavirus. Later, the Tokyo swab confirmed the result—I had caught the virus even before I left the ship.

It didn't scare me too badly. I knew my number was up. The way I saw it, I was going to get stuck in at least 14 more days of quarantine, even if I didn't get the virus. So many fellow passengers had come down with the illness, including one of my friends, that I'd gotten somewhat used to the idea that I might catch it, too. My wife, however, tested negative and headed to quarantine at a separate facility a few blocks away.

After those days being cooped up on the ship together, I think we both relished the alone time; we still could communicate through our phones.

During the first few days, the hospital staff hooked me up to an IV, mostly as a precaution, and used it to administer magnesium and potassium, just to make sure I had plenty of vitamins. Other than that, my treatment has consisted of what's felt like gallons and gallons of Gatorade—and, when my fever rose just above 100 degrees, some ibuprofen. After 10 days, I moved out of biocontainment and into the same facility as Jeri. Now we can video-chat from our separate quarantines, in neighboring rooms.

'YELLOW ZONE' IN MILAN

Milan is close to the epicenter of Italy's Covid-19 outbreak, said Greta Privitera in Slate.com. *Schools and offices are closed; residents have been asked to avoid contact with others as much as possible.*

IT'S DAY 6 of isolation, and I wake up to the sound of my phone buzzing. I stretch my arm out to my nightstand, type in my code, and read the message, from a dear friend of mine: "My kid's been up since 6 a.m. We did a puzzle, had breakfast, watched three episodes of *Peppa Pig* and played Spider-Man. At this point I'm just hoping to get Covid-19."

We are among those in the "yellow zone," meaning "those who live too close to the red zone," near Lodi, where on Feb. 21 the first Italian breeding ground of Covid-19 was found. A second was found in Veneto, and in a few days, hundreds of people had been infected. So: Schools, museums, movie theaters, pools, everything is closed. Everyone who can is working remotely. We are allowed to go outside but asked to avoid contact with too many people.

It's 9 a.m. As I've done for the past six days, I turn on the news before drinking my coffee. The number of infected people

AP (2)

has increased, but an expert is about to explain why we still shouldn't worry too much. My oldest daughter shouts to me that she wants pancakes for breakfast. She's ecstatic to be home from school, so much so that the other evening as she was falling asleep, she let out a little "hooray for the coronavirus." Everyone should understand that forced, prolonged exposure to the people you love can, in some cases, create monsters.

My husband and I divide the day in half. I work in the morning while he takes care of our girls, and then he gets his turn in the afternoon. There's basically nothing left to eat because we avoided the supermarkets when they were assaulted by people panicking. They looted all the pasta, along with the frozen and canned foods. I could have ordered on Amazon Prime, but in the meantime I got an email explaining that deliveries were delayed due to Covid-19, so I was discouraged. At any rate, it means we'll have to go to the store without a mask, as we are part of the group that didn't stock up in advance.

The day is spent with *Peppa Pig* on loop, emails, new rituals of washing our hands (now while singing "Happy Birthday"), and a break to bake cookies. Between episodes, I try to catch newscasts, which are now as addictive as Netflix. One reason why I like the TV news is that I'm trying to avoid social networks. Yesterday, I risked a confrontation with a Facebook "friend" who posted an article on why we should close the borders on immigrants—right in the middle of the days when other countries are closing their borders on us. If it's not this kind of thing, it's irritation from how everyone I know has become an expert in virology and public health, or the frustration that comes from those who believe "coronavirus is a joke, it's just like the flu," or, on the other hand, those in the panicked "we're all gonna die" camp. I have the feeling there are many more people who are simply respecting the rules to limit the infection, but they're not the ones posting.

At least once a day I get a message from a friend that says, "I've got a cough. Should I call the doctor?" I got a little scared when I had a headache and shivers the other night, so I secretly locked myself in the bathroom to take my temperature. My youngest found the thermometer, and, as a divine punishment, I spent the next hour taking the temperature of all of her dolls. No coronavirus.

RECOVERY IN YEONGCHEON, SOUTH KOREA

Kim Seung-hwan was one of the first South Koreans to be diagnosed with a coronavirus infection, said Min Joo Kim in The Washington Post. *After eight days of treatment, he's largely recovered.*

At first, the 47-year-old restaurant owner thought he was just tired from work. Doctors prescribed some cold medicine. But Kim Seung-hwan's headache worsened. He started to run a fever. It was in mid-February, before clusters of coronavirus infection were reported around his hometown, Yeongcheon, about 180 miles southeast of Seoul. But the region would quickly become the center of the country's outbreak.

South Koreans disinfect streets to stem the spread of Covid-19.

Kim's condition did not improve, and he went to a bigger hospital in nearby Daegu city on Feb. 18. At that point, coronavirus cases were starting to appear nearby. Just hours before Kim arrived at the hospital, the first coronavirus case was confirmed in Daegu. Nurses in protective gear whisked Kim away to an isolation ward.

Kim's account—of infection, fear, and recovery—is just one story among tens of thousands as the coronavirus spreads around the world. But it offers a window into the arc of the disease for some patients and the toll it exacts on the body and mind.

The first moments in the hospital were a blur of activity. Because he displayed pneumonia-like symptoms, he was quarantined in a negative-pressure room that keeps the air from seeping outside. Doctors took swabs from his nose and mouth to test for Covid-19. Kim waited for the results in the isolation ward. "The only thing I could hear was the buzzing noise of the ventilator," Kim said. He was not sure if his headache was a symptom of the virus or from snowballing concerns about possible infection in his family home and his restaurant.

As he saw the news of the virus spreading in his town, Kim's thoughts were with his wife and daughter, who had taken care of him at home. He remembered their worried eyes on him tossing and turning in his bed from severe pain. He couldn't sleep for several nights in a row. "I was so tired, but could not fall asleep because of the aches and pain felt all over my body," he said.

The fever induced by the coronavirus felt "achingly hot"; Kim's body temperature spiked above 100 degrees. Doctors at the hospital prescribed him antibiotics, other medicine, and intravenous fluids.

Four days into treatment, on Feb. 21, the doctors said his lungs had returned to normal. His symptoms started to ease. His fever broke. His head stopped aching. But the worries still raged. The television he watched to distract himself from the pain beamed alerts of South Korea's first death from the coronavirus. Would it cripple his body? Had he infected his family and the customers at his restaurant?

Immediately after Kim's diagnosis, the provincial government tracked down and published the list of the places he had visited during the four days since he started displaying symptoms. Health authorities in South Korea take those measures with every patient to help the public identify the risks.

The clinics Kim visited and his seafood restaurant were listed online and shut down for disinfection. His family and customers at his restaurant have been tested for the virus. No relatives have turned up positive. Neither has anyone who visited the restaurant, he says, as far as he knows.

Kim's health turned a corner last week. He could walk around inside the ward and started doing light exercises. He tested negative for the virus on Feb. 24 and again the next day. On Wednesday, eight days after he was diagnosed, he was released from the hospital. He is now on a self-imposed 14-day quarantine, staying in his room and not dining with his wife and daughter. "The doctors told me I can go back to my daily life, but the fear of reinfection still lingers in my mind," he said.

Excerpted from articles that originally appeared in The Washington Post *and* Slate.com. *Used with permission.*

The Puzzle Page

Crossword No. 542: East Coasters by Matt Gaffney

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ACROSS

1 *This Is 40* director Apatow
5 Losing Brexit side
11 Potential maple syrup
14 Indoor Summer Olympics event
15 Racetrack bet
16 Face on fivers
17 Iconic singer who appears in the new documentary *Jimmy Carter Rock & Roll President*
19 Super-fun, as a party
20 A.C. or D.C., for some people
21 Nick of *Affliction*
23 Group of tools
24 Like some horoscopes
26 She's paid her dues
30 Had as a goal
33 Curvy figures
34 Comes to rest
35 Phrase of acceptance
36 Embarrassing info
37 Each of the first names in the four theme entries will be an Atlantic one of these in 2020
38 Loud buzzers
39 "The list goes on and on"
40 Seals the fate of
41 Instruments for Yo-Yo Ma
42 Neighbors of Thais
44 Spoil
45 Like going all in on a bluff
46 "___ favor" (Peruvian "please")
47 Person easily used
49 Putting up posts
54 Massage
55 2019 Emmy nominee for *Ozark*
58 Wong or Wentworth
59 Like Liechtenstein
60 Singing Sandler
61 Man on Chinese money
62 Chuck in the air
63 Preschoolers, e.g.

DOWN

1 Movie knight
2 At the time of
3 Business with slicers
4 Shoulder muscle
5 Make as good as new
6 Rank above all others
7 It's about half of Earth's size
8 Do something
9 "Who am ___ judge?"
10 Diaper changers, often
11 Oscar-winning actress in the new AMC series *Dispatches From Elsewhere*
12 Somewhat
13 Mayor ___ (2020 candidate, casually)
18 Worried utterance
22 Time-tested
24 Some expensive jackets
25 Watch options
26 Runway strutter
27 Title role for Madonna
28 U.S. senator who recently took flak for recording a selfie video while driving
29 Order with strips
30 Molecule parts
31 Wide receiver Beckham Jr.
32 Funny O'Donnell
34 Unemotional
37 Enjoy the tub
38 Nightmare's setting
40 Put in a showcase
41 Welsh ___ (adorable dog)
43 Cook using Apples
44 Igloo product
46 Where points lie, in geometry
47 Make up for not studying
48 Molokai movements
49 Naval prison
50 Mini flyer
51 ___-European
52 "That's an impressive trick!"
53 Spots for squats
56 Part of IPA
57 Kick things ___ notch

The Week Contest

This week's question: Prince Harry and Meghan Markle have reluctantly agreed to drop their plan to market the "Sussex Royal" brand after the queen forbade them from using the word "royal." Please come up with a snappy new brand name that the couple could use to exploit their ex-royal status.

Last week's contest: Astrophysicists are trying to identify the source of mysterious radio signals that are being emitted at regular intervals from a galaxy 500 million light-years away. Please come up with the important message that an alien civilization far, far away might be trying to send us.

THE WINNER: AMAZING Opportunity! Send Username and Password NOW! *—Norm Carrier, Flat Rock, N.C.*

SECOND PLACE: Oops, did I click "reply all"? *Max Goldstein, Weston, Fla.*

THIRD PLACE: Hawking was right. See you soon. *Jason Feltner, Cheyenne, Wyo.*

For runners-up and complete contest rules, please go to theweek.com/contest.

How to enter: Submissions should be emailed to contest@theweek.com. Please include your name, address, and daytime telephone number for verification; this week, type "Brand new" in the subject line. Entries are due by noon, Eastern Time, Tuesday, March 10. Winners will appear on the Puzzle Page next issue and at theweek.com/puzzles on Friday, March 13. In the case of identical or similar entries, the first one received gets credit.

◀ **The winner gets a one-year subscription to *The Week.***

Sudoku

Fill in all the boxes so that each row, column, and outlined square includes all the numbers from 1 through 9.

Difficulty: hard

8					6	9		
		2					7	
		7			8		1	2
			6			2		
2				3				7
		5			4			
7	5		3			1		
	3					8		
		6	8					9

Find the solutions to all *The Week*'s puzzles online: **www.theweek.com/puzzle**.

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